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# NO. 1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX

## NEW SKILLS IN CHARACTER DESIGN

Freshen up your digital art techniques with guidance from pro artist **Mel Milton**



### EXPRESSIVE PORTRAITS

Paint vibrant images on ArtRage's digital canvas

### ALSO INSIDE

**How to layer in dark intensity with pencils**

Meet the theme park ride concept artists

**Better figure poses with Patrick J Jones**



*Give your original characters a strong personality See page 62*

### WORKSHOP PAINT WITH A LIMITED PALETTE

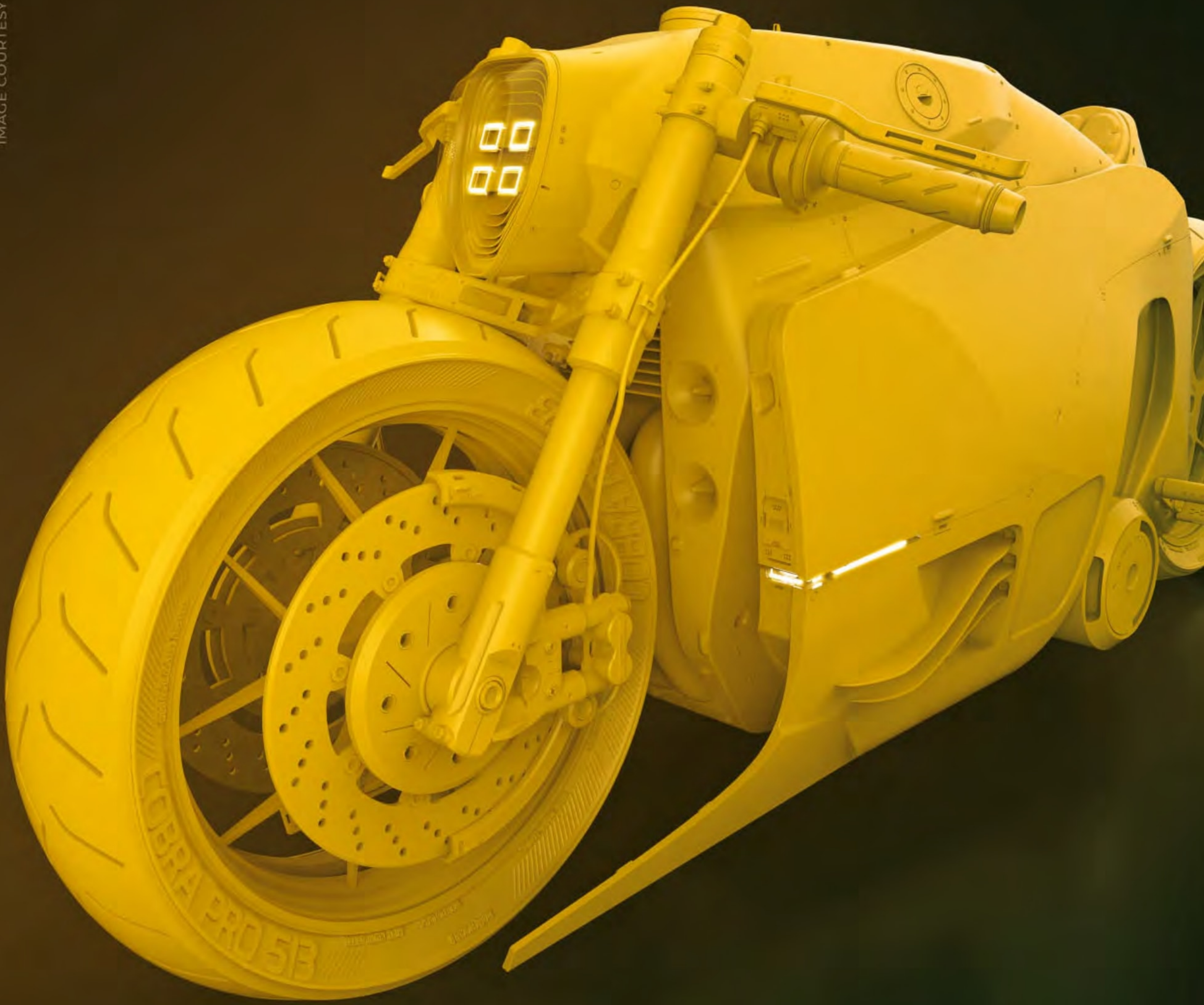
Add impact to your image with just four values

FUTURE  
ISSUE 168

**SVETLIN VELINOV** MAGIC'S CARD ART SUPERSTAR ON GOBLINS AND DRAGONS



IMAGE COURTESY OF NELSON TAI



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## Welcome to... NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX



How have you been this month? I've been away for an event. I was fortunate enough to be invited to Trojan Horse Was A Unicorn in Malta last month. It was an invigorating experience.

One of the things that I loved the most about this gathering was seeing how the attendees

fed off each other's creativity and energy. Every single person I spoke to at Trojan Horse added something to the experience: everyone was engaged with art and its creation in some way or other.

Hanging out with like-minded people is good for the soul. Do you ever get to meet up with fellow artists? I appreciate that not all of you can get to a convention or event in another country, but maybe you could find local sketch meets in cafés and bars, or art gallery tours...?

While I've got you, have you considered buying a loved one a magazine subscription for Christmas – or even adding it to your own Christmas list? It's an inspiring gift that will deliver 13 issues of art for the whole of 2019. There are print and digital edition options and lots of savings to be made if you sign up either via the links on page 4 (UK subscribers) or page 67 (overseas). Go see!

*Claire*

**Claire Howlett, Editor**  
[claire@imaginefx.com](mailto:claire@imaginefx.com)

### EDITOR'S CHOICE Three of my top picks this month...

46



#### Abstract and surreal art

I could lose hours poring over Vanessa's sumptuous artwork. Treat yourself to the same time on page 46.

84



#### Unique and expressive

Fine artist Phil Galloway shares his digital art process using ArtRage and traditional techniques.

68



#### Values and contrast

Min Yum shows that paring back an image helps you see what's important to focus on when painting.

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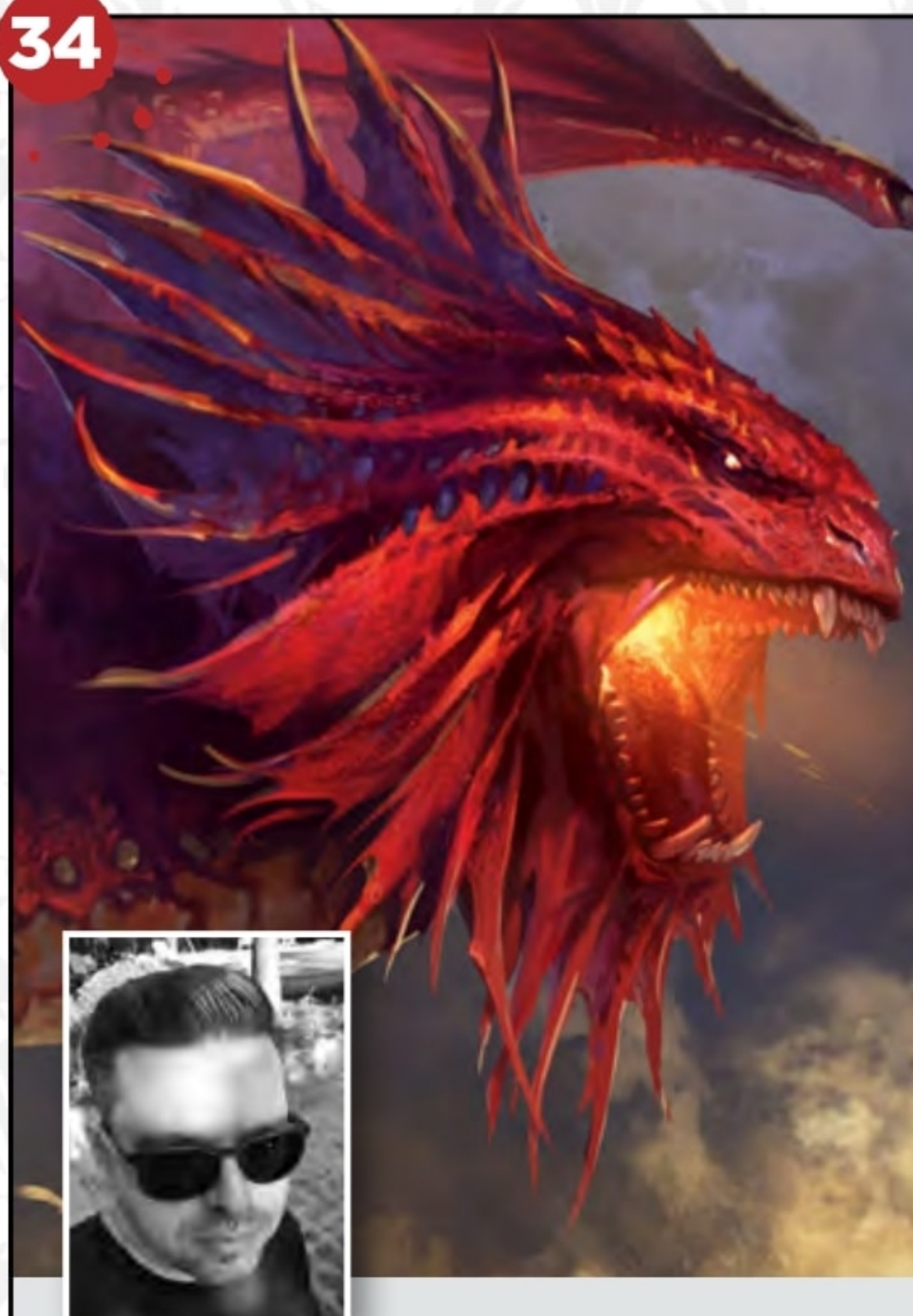
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Artist Portfolio

**SVETLIN  
VELINOV**

"I like to inject life into the characters and the scenes they're in"

Svetlin makes the Magic happen

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Artist Portfolio

**VANESSA  
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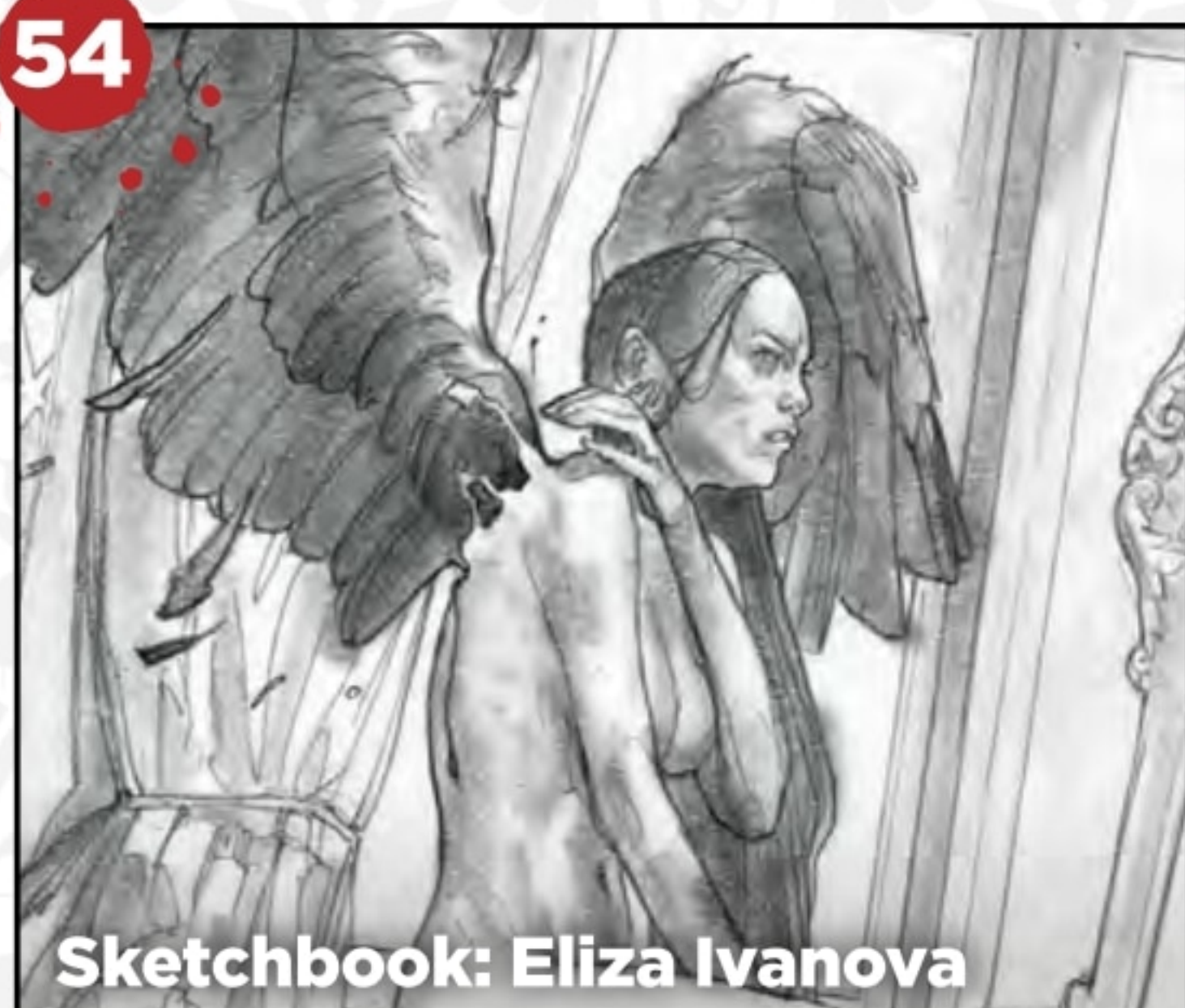


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Mel Milton reveals the many creative choices he has to make, as he designs and paints an original female character.

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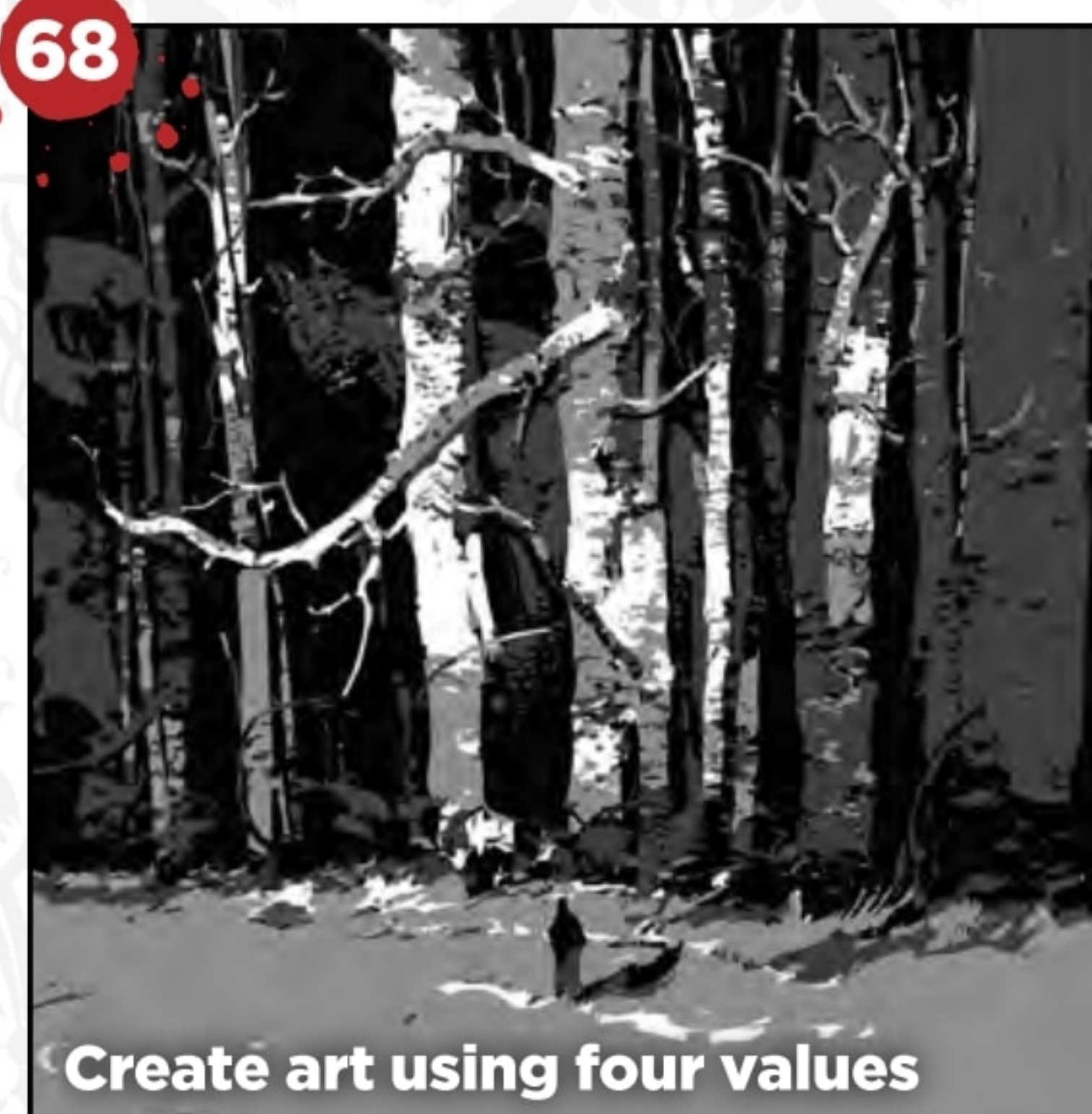
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NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

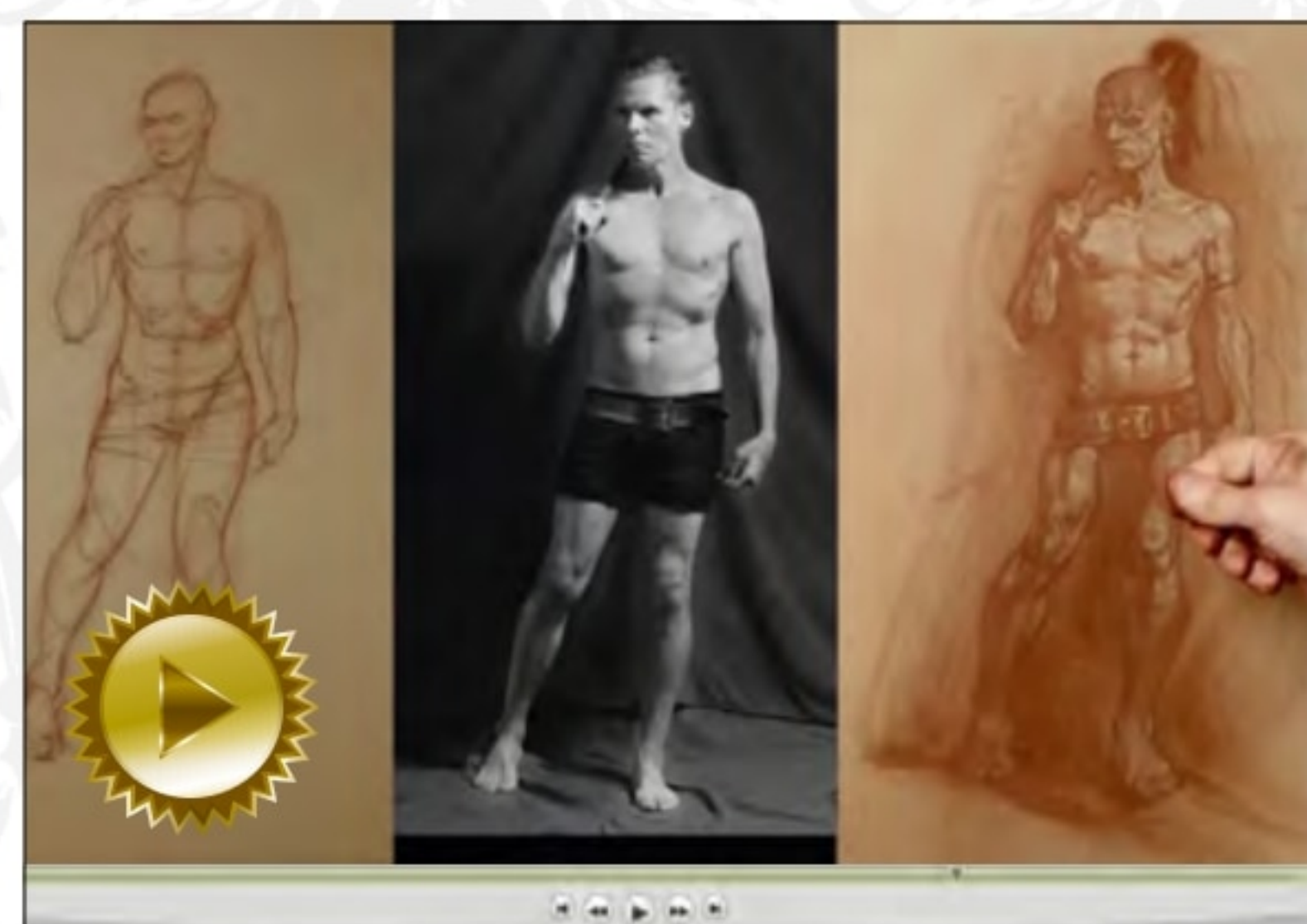
# ImagineFX Resources

Get hold of this issue's videos and custom brushes by visiting <https://ifxm.ag/character168design>



## Bring texture and colour into your art

Watch how Phil Galloway uses a handful of references photos to produce a characterful portrait piece in ArtRage. Then turn to page 84 to read more about his painting techniques.



## Make your figure poses more dynamic and engaging

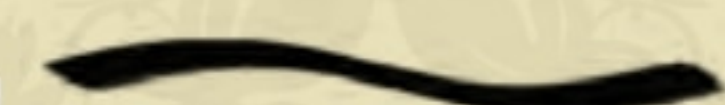
In Patrick J Jones' video, contrapposto theory is applied to the male figure. More on page 76.



## Watch a clip from Goro Fujita's Found a Friend

Goro shows how to light and paint a rainy scene. We review his video on page 95.

## PLUS 32 CUSTOM BRUSHES, INCLUDING...



### MELS PENCIL BRUSH

Mel Milton uses this brush to sketch with, but also for adding texture at larger size settings.



### FLAT\_ROUND

A slight variation on the Photoshop default brush that helps Min Yum to maintain limited values in his art.



### DAUB IMPRESSIONIST 01

Phil Galloway uses Paolo Limoncelli's custom ArtRage brush to create the abstract, blossom-filled background.

NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS

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# FXPosé

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## Kimonas Theodossiou

LOCATION: Scotland MEDIA: Photoshop WEB: [www.artstation.com/kimonas](http://www.artstation.com/kimonas)

Kimonas is working on Magic: The Gathering. He aims to bring a sense of realism to fantasy themes, and is inspired by the Old Masters.



### 1 THE LION TEMPLE GUARD

"A veteran warrior gazing at the setting sun, which bathes him in its evening glow. I painted him from a low angle to make him appear more imposing."

### 2 SYMBIOSIS

"The centaurs lent the elves their mobility and ferocity, while the elves brought the centaurs their strong grasp of tactics. The strong diagonal creates a potent dynamic of speed and power."



ImagineFX

Christmas 2018

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## Gert van Dijk

**LOCATION:** The Netherlands **MEDIA:** Painter, MATLAB, Vue Infinite, Sculptris, ZBrush **WEB:** [www.planetfuraha.org](http://www.planetfuraha.org)

Gert combined his interests in painting, science and programming to depict life on the planet Furaha. "The animals were created with Darwinian evolution and Newtonian mechanics in mind, with added humour," he says.

1



### 1 FIELD STUDIES ON BRONTORUSPS

"Brontorusp can cover large distances, so studying their behaviour in the field isn't easy. They tolerate people on horseback better than motorised vehicles."

### 2 A GATHERING OF SPRABS

"These sprabs were placed here by myself, but don't at all belong in the same biotope. Their radial symmetry enables them to scurry off in any direction without turning."

### 3 LOVESICK DROODLE

"The 'lorica' or droodle can't climb down easily from trees. If found in a tree, it has either tried to escape flooding or attract a mate."

2



3







**4 SAWJAWS TRYING TO IMPRESS ONE ANOTHER**  
“Sawjaws can’t digest humans, but usually only find that out too late for the human in question. It’s not forbidden to swim here, but would you want to?”









## Rachel Clark

**LOCATION:** England **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** <https://rhclark.artstation.com>

Rachel's work is inspired by classic literature and the animal kingdom. She tells us that, "I'm fascinated by the way art can transport us into other worlds."

### 1 CANARY KNIGHT

"Birds and knights are both beautiful subjects to paint, and the combination can be angelic! I was also inspired by the colour yellow, which is under-appreciated in art."

### 2 EYES ON YOU

"I enjoyed embracing classic horror movie tropes in this film poster concept. The eye has always been popular as a subject, and I aimed to give my own take on the tried and true."



### 3 THE TOWER

"I love painting architecture. The bigger and more ominous, the better. With this piece, I was inspired by ornate architecture of Gothic cathedrals."

### 4 RED

"Despite how simple their anatomy appears, snakes are surprisingly complex to paint. I wanted to give the composition a surreal quality, influenced by textile design."





## Jodie Muir

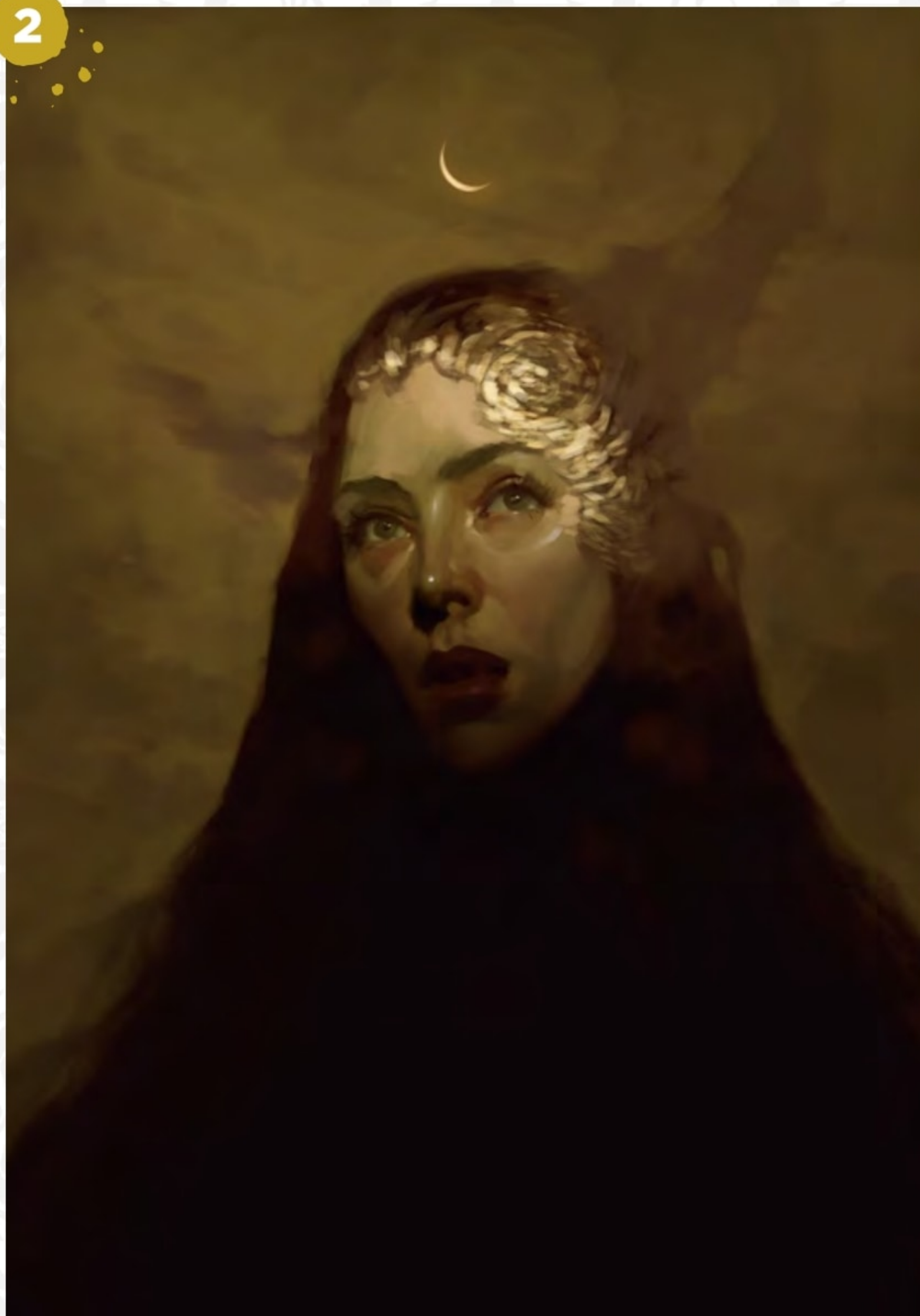
**LOCATION:** England **MEDIA:** Photoshop **WEB:** [www.jodiemuir.squarespace.com](http://www.jodiemuir.squarespace.com)

Illustrator Jodie is inspired by retro fantasy art, symbolism, metal and the Old Masters. "In my personal work, I love to explore the romantic and the dark, the occult and the mystical," she comments.

1



2



### 1 MUSE

"I'm seduced by the idea of the muse. I find the often tempestuous, occasionally destructive and obsessive relationship between an artist and inspiration fascinating."

### 2 SKY

"In this piece I had fun mashing a more traditional portrait style with a slightly surreal, fantasy vibe. As ever, head in the clouds."

### 3 THE CONTINENT

"An illustration for a Washington Post article on the re-writing of Keira Drake's novel The Continent. Visualising it in a sensitive way was quite a challenge, but a lot of fun."

### 4 HELL

"This is best described as a love letter to the old gods. I love images that invoke a sense of power – especially the darker side of it."

3















# Jeremy Murphy

**LOCATION:** US **MEDIA:** Painter, Photoshop, Illustrator **WEB:** [www.trianglejump.com](http://www.trianglejump.com)

"Improving is what it's all about for me," says Jeremy, "but because I know I'll never be entirely satisfied, painting is like a game I can never win. That's what keeps me coming back."

2



## 1 CONTAINMENT FAILURE

"This piece started as an experiment with the Symmetry brush function in Corel Painter. I wanted to show someone staying cool and determined as her ship's cockpit windshield fails around her."

## 2 SERVER GUARDIAN

"This sat half-finished in my sketchbook folder for months. I used some of the Particle brushes in Painter to create the energy flowing from his floating sword scabbards."

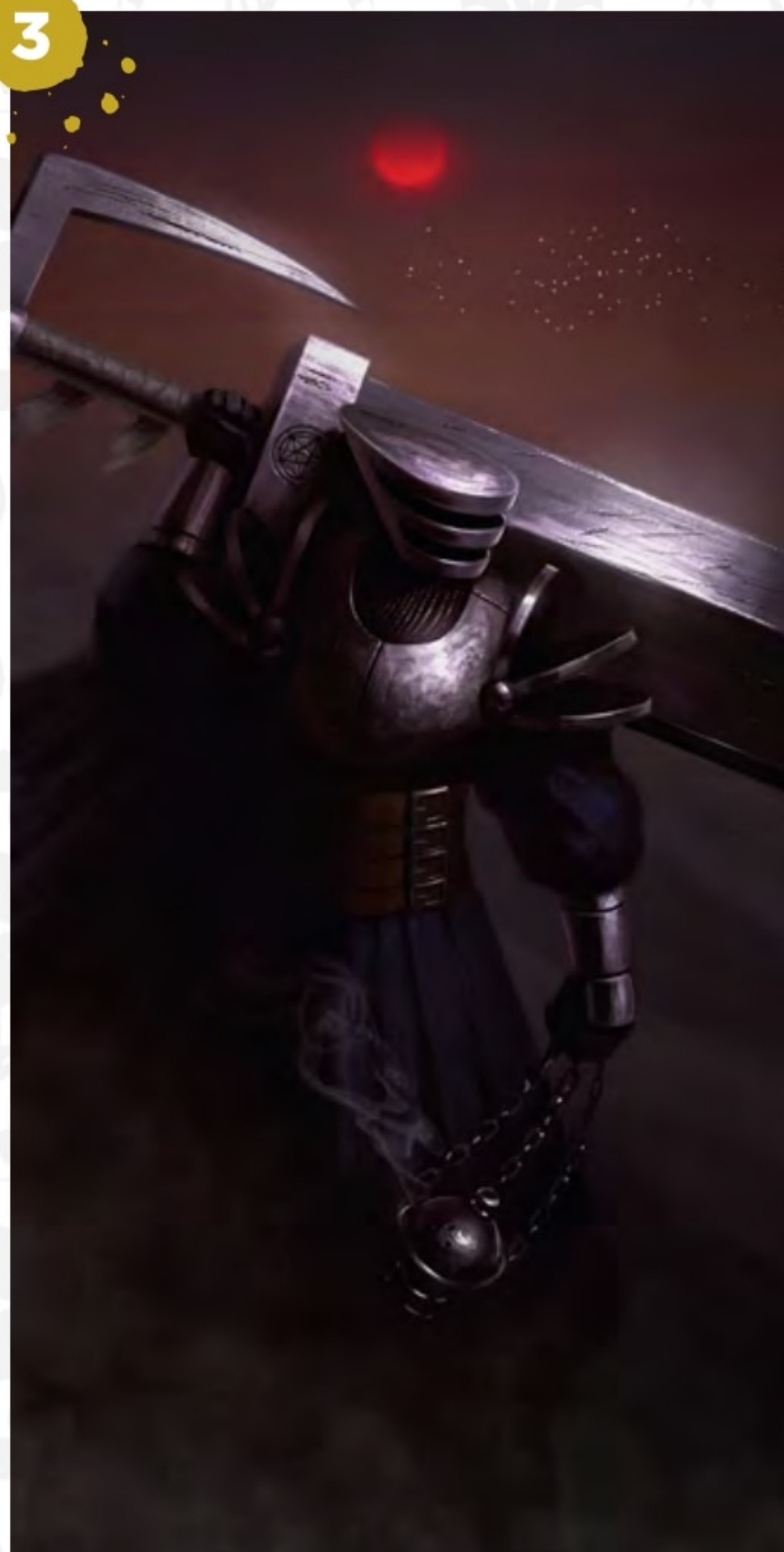
## 3 DEMON HUNTER

"I was eager to try out some of the techniques from Richard Schmid's amazing book *Alla Prima*, and used this demon hunter character from my sketchbook as a guinea pig."

## 4 GIANT

"I've been a gamer my whole life, and the *Dark Souls* series oozes inspiration for me. This is a tribute to the giants that populate the series. They kinda scare the crap out of me."

3



4





# ARTIST NEWS, SOFTWARE & EVENTS ImagineNation

AT THE CORE OF THE DIGITAL ART COMMUNITY



Qianjiao Ma's concept for the market place of a theme park uses vibrant colour and bright light to sell the welcoming nature of the location.

## Park life!

**Go faster** Meet the artists utilising their concept art skills to design and build theme park attractions around the world. **Beren Neale** holds on tight!

If you're a regular reader of **ImagineFX**, you're probably interested in creating art for your favourite film or game. Maybe you're working on your own comic book, or busy boosting your digital art skills with the help of our workshops.

There's also a good chance that you've not considered theme park art. You've probably been to one, but you may have missed that the concept art behind these fantasy spaces are as inspiring as any imagery that's created for the latest Hollywood blockbuster.

What's more, it's a massive industry. There are more than 400 amusement parks in the US, and 300 in Europe. Disney alone made 16.16 billion dollars from its theme parks back in 2015! Themed entertainment – and the art that underpins it all – is in rude health.

**Nathaniel West**, who's worked on effects-heavy films such as *Inception* and *Godzilla*, and theme parks like *Harry Potter World* in Universal Studios Orlando, and *Shanghai Hatching Ocean Park*, says



that, "It's all the same principles as far as the artwork is concerned."

### KNOW THE BASICS

Nathaniel continues: "Things like value structure and knowledge of colour theory is important. You also need to know how to work well with people and under deadline pressure, as well as understand the basics of environment lighting and design."



Years before Greg Pro's digital character work for theme parks, he painted 12 oil paintings for a Japanese theme park. They were his entry into the work of themed entertainment.

But what of the differences? Theme park art, says Nathaniel, is more "optimistic and bright. Films and games are usually moodier and darker, whereas theme parks emphasise colour and charm much more."

Furthermore, you get to walk around in your own creation! The initial stages of concept art may focus on similar stages of film concept, like mood and colour. But then come the architects...

Concept and animation background artist **Qianjiao Ma** spells it out for us: "Your concepts have to be buildable, and to consider things like ceiling height and ➡➡"







## UNICORN SPOTTED!

Editor Claire spent a week covering Trojan Horse was a Unicorn, rubbing shoulders with the great and the good from the digital art world in sunny Malta. **Page 26**



## A ROCK AND AN ART PLACE

We visit Jean-Sébastien Rossbach's art studio, which is just a stone's throw away from the famous Lascaux caves. But we don't make any man cave jokes... **Page 28**



## MORE, MORE, MORE LETTERS

More Corel Painter workshops, more coverage of artists working in animation, and more of your lovely artwork that we've seen on social media. **Page 33**



Nathaniel West's concept for Polar Ocean World park in Shanghai has the epic feel of big budget movie art.



Some of the sketches that Qianjiao Ma produced recently for the entrance of an undisclosed theme park project.

“Films and games are usually moodier and darker. Theme parks emphasise colour and charm”





Greg Pro turned down his one and only film brief, as he was "too happy with his cushy theme park work." What was the film? Jumanji!



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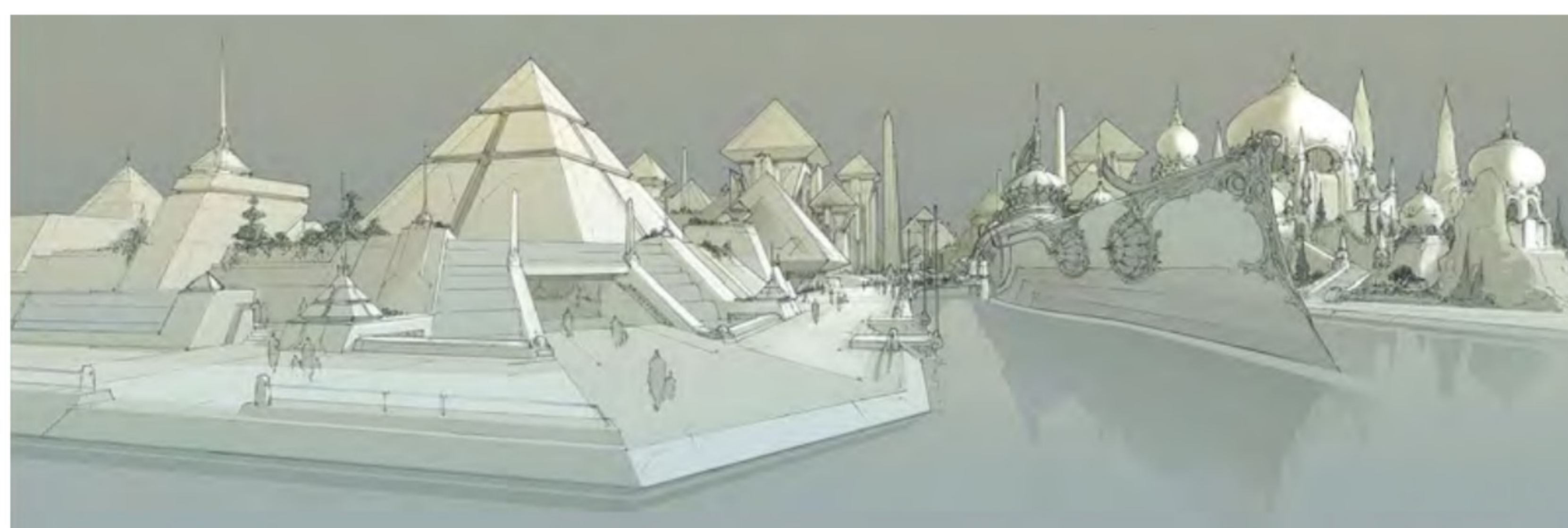
➡ furniture size. Unlike concept art for film, which is primarily concerned with cool visuals, theme park design requires the equivalent attention to design for the entire space, not just a single shot. As a theme park designer, I'm also weighing up the visitor experience. How would the guests interact with the attractions?"

For digital art legend **Stephan Martinière**, the first and foremost skill



you'll have coming into themed entertainment, "is your imagination." That will be quite a relief to those expecting you'd

“The Warner Bros. World in Abu Dhabi took 10 years to make”



need a degree in architecture. In fact, each themed project seems to differ as much as games, films or TV shows, fully depending on the client. Some want hyper-real visuals from the get-go. Others ask artists to work towards reality only once the loose brush marks have captured the feel of the park space.

"Of course, having architecture design skills can certainly help in

Stephan created art for an Egyptian-themed park in Dubai, one of several he's worked on over the years.

understanding circulation or cost, but it's not a requirement," says Stephan, who first got into theme park art back in 1980s with the Japanese indoor park Sanrio Puroland. "Theme park companies have technical directors and architects who handle the more technical aspects," he says. Photoshop is Stephan's primary tool, and though his concepts are usually detailed, they always come with a painterly feel.

## A DECADE IN THE MAKING

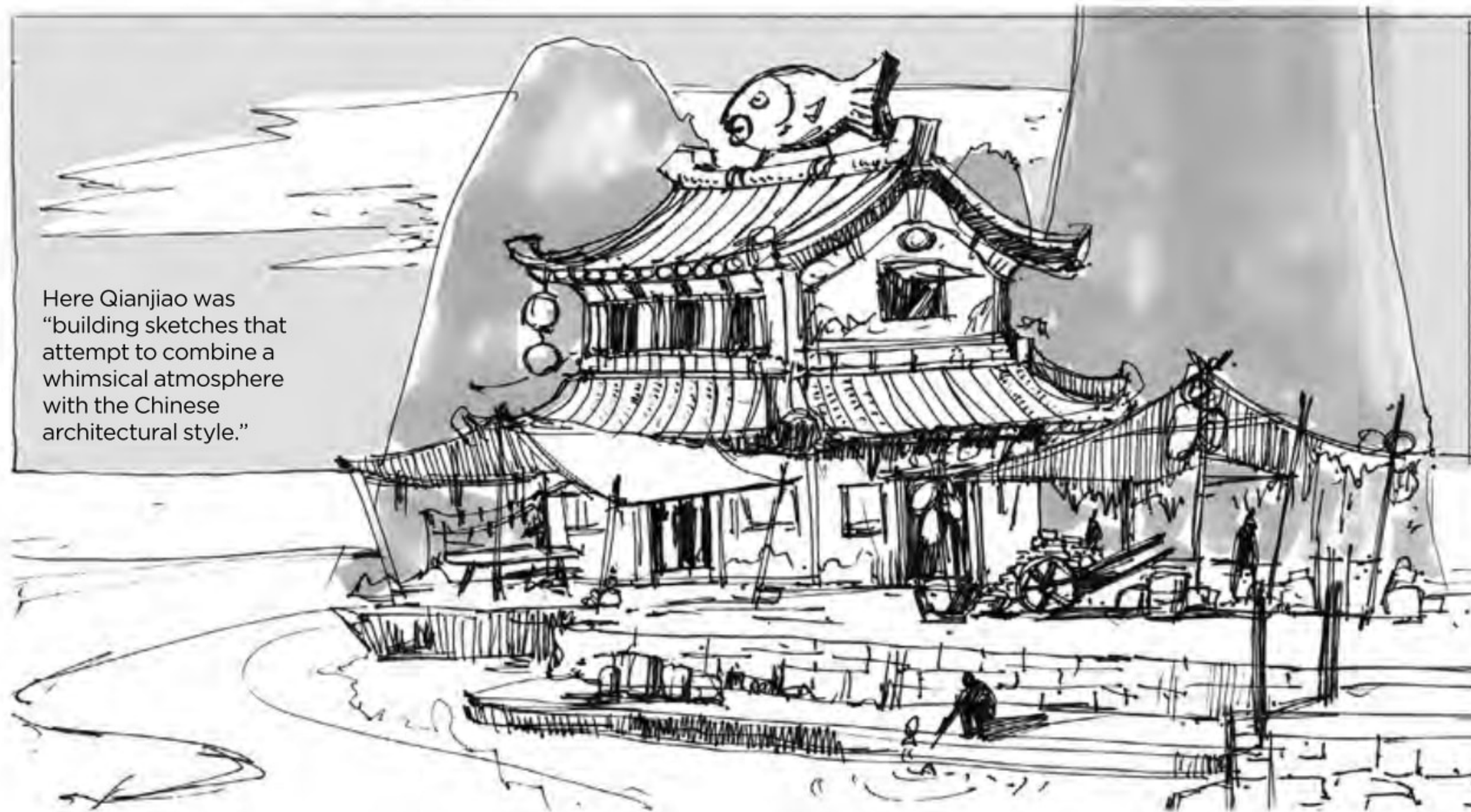
Yes, the chance to walk in a world you've created is a huge appeal, but don't expect the relatively short lengths of film projects. "The timeline for theme park design is quite extensive," says Stephan. "One of my credits, the Warner Bros. World in Abu Dhabi, took 10 years to make, from the initial concept art, to completion."

Whether the next biggest Disney instalment or a smaller scale affair, most theme park projects take years to design and produce, but, "when you finally experience the Adventure Isle,



Nathaniel not only produced the beautiful bird's eye art of park exteriors, but also elements including the welcome area and the gift store for this theme park (shown here).





The Pirates of the Caribbean or the Avatar's Na'vi River Journey," Stephan continues, "it does bring a big grin to your face. Theme parks also reconnect me to my childhood."

As with any job in any industry, it's a good idea to ask yourself, "What extras can I bring to the table?" In an ever-demanding industry, for 2D artists that usually means offering 3D skills. "Clients often provide you with rough 3D models, generally created in SketchUp," Stephan says, "so again it's not essential, but it's worth it. I was

Stephan Martinière has been working on theme park art for decades now, and loves the immersive style of the art, along with the final construction, too!

working on a futuristic project recently and was given the blueprints of the different spaces. Being able to build and design the space in 3D from measurements enabled me to be more accurate in creating the different architectural elements for the space, and also to make the concepts work visually from different points of view."

For the Pirates of the Caribbean boat ride Stephan received the 3D block-out model of each of the rooms of the ride along with blue prints, and references from the film. ➡

## INDUSTRY INSIGHT

### GET INTO THEME PARKS

Nathaniel West reveals the five art areas you'll need to master...

#### 1 Do more colourful work

Theme parks are all about happy colours and a whimsical mood. Using animated films as a colour guide is a good idea. It wants to feel real, but pushing the colour to have a bit more style is always welcomed. A lot of concept artists from games and film struggle with this approach, and sometimes you'll see artwork that feels too moody and depressing.

#### 2 It's all in the planning

It's good to understand the basics of theme park master-planning and how crowds flow through them. That way, if you need to conceptualise an area, you'll be able to mass buildings and planters properly. Retail, and Food and Beverage go hand in hand, and showing happy people spending money is always a plus in pitches with business-minded executives.

#### 3 Getting paid

The pay range depends on your skill level. If you're starting out at a company, I would expect you can make \$1,200-1,500 per week. If you're freelancing, your rates should be higher than this. The higher your skill level and reputation, the more you can charge.

#### 4 Save your money

Theme parks can be cyclical, going from extremely busy to very slow. Most of it depends on the global economic climate and which countries are thriving and developing attractions for their populations. Many companies will thrive one minute and be gone the next, so you have to keep that in the back of your mind at all times.

#### 5 Be a team player

Things often change on projects, and you'll be asked to redo artwork. Being easy going about changes is key. Always try and add value to a team. You want to be an asset, and never a liability.



Concept artist Nathaniel West worked on a range of films before diversifying into the theme park industry.

[www.nathanielwest.org](http://www.nathanielwest.org)





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➡ “The first step was to have a meeting with the art and creative directors to discuss the visual and narrative direction of the ride,” says Stephan. “During the meeting we also discussed the various technical requirements such as safety, boat clearance, light and FX uses. My task was to create detailed and elaborate paintings to define the mood, details and lighting of each scene.”

## CREATING A VISUAL GUIDE

The process took months of refinement for Stephan, because his paintings were going to be the main visual guide for the rest of the process. “I also produced the ride entrance poster once the ride was completed. The 3D block-out that was provided

Greg’s work on Toy Story Land at Disney’s Hollywood Studios in Florida. The park opened June 2018, and is the fourth of its name around the world.

When Qianjiao isn’t creating theme park ‘point of view’ renderings, early ideation sketches and interaction designs, she works as an animation background artist.

Between theme park assignments, Nathaniel can transfer his architectural skills to projects, such as the Beverly Hills Arcade.



was sufficient for me to move on to the painting stage without further need to build extra 3D but for other, more recent projects that required a more tech look, I almost entirely built the scenes in 3D.”

It’s all good and well discovering a whole new world of art possibilities, but what if you don’t know anyone working in themed entertainment? The truth is, breaking into the theme park industry is pretty much the same as any other. There are various approaches that you can take, from arranging to meet an industry figure at

a convention, to sending your portfolio to the theme part art department.

For veteran artist **Greg Pro**, the key was being hungry for work. In art school he was being taught by the brilliant Fred Fixler, and when Landmark Entertainment contacted Fred for a job producing 12 oil paintings depicting a Japanese fairy tale, to be installed on a carousel in a theme park in Japan, Fred recommended Greg.

“I had no idea that there was a market for theme park art until I saw



“ My task was to create detailed and elaborate paintings to define the mood, details and lighting of each scene ”





As well as the ability to visualise space, Nathaniel says a strong grasp of colour and light theory is crucial in theme park art.



Greg Pro's Dandy Dead theme park character concept in Photoshop.



the work of Eric Heschong," says Greg. "His work inspired me so much that I wanted to be a part of that field. Soon after the carousel art was finished, they assigned me some concept art to do for a dark ride. I can't recall the project, but I remember using gouache to paint the artwork. That's when Eric suggested I try Cel-Vinyl paint." Greg stayed on with Landmark for years, creating hundreds of concepts for theme parks all over the world.

"I was fortunate enough to work on many high-profile concepts such as

Jurassic Park: The Ride, T2-3D: Battle Across Time, Skeleton Warriors, and even Michael Jackson's Neverland Ranch," he says.

## DO YOUR RESEARCH

Stephan sees getting into theme park art as the same as film, game, comics or animation. Do your research, find out the main companies – Disney is by far the biggest players in the business, having kicked things off with the very first modern theme park, Disneyland, in 1955. Search out

For the Adventure Isle for Shanghai Disneyland, Stephan was involved very early on in the process, including the narrative development of the land and, of course, the visual concepts.

contact details, and send in your art that shows the skills needed to build worlds. "I didn't know what to expect at first, but quickly realised I loved the challenge of learning and working within specific spaces and finding ideas and solutions to particular technical requirements," says Stephan.

For Nathaniel, "It's like any field. If you do good work and you're professional, you will stand out within your industry. You might not be known around the world, but you can stand out among your peers." 🍷





Social activities are a big part of THU. Artists are encouraged to participate in group events so they can make friends.



Goro Fujita took to the stage at THU to discuss his career to date and provide a masterclass in VR painting with Quill.

Gutierrez spent time speaking with and giving portfolio reviews to the artists who paid to attend.

It's a part of the reason why THU has gained a cult following among artists.



One attendee, **Lucas Staniec**, a concept artist working in Poland says: "I had a chance to meet and listen to artists that I've admired for a long time. It was great to realise they're also humans dealing with the same problems."

The impressive gallery hall featured art demos and talks from the likes of Kim Jung Gi, Karla Ortiz, Phil Hale and Karl Kopinski, while the recruitment area buzzed with career opportunity as artists showed their portfolios to top games, film and animation houses.

Andre and his team have created a place for artists to connect and gain a creative boost from each other. Lucas certainly reaped the benefits: "The energy that was going around gave me a huge kick to create and to stay true to myself," he says.

The dates for next year's event in Malta have already been set for 23-28 September. Will you be a part of the tribe in 2019? Follow developments at [www.trojan-unicorn.com](http://www.trojan-unicorn.com).

Many freelance artists often work alone. Events like THU enables an art community to come together.

## Trojan Horse Was A Unicorn

**Magical gathering** A week of inspiration and learning for over 1,000 artists and creative professionals

After five successful years in Portugal, digital art gathering Trojan Horse Was A Unicorn – THU to attendees – spent its sixth iteration in Valletta, Malta and brought together over 1,000 artists from 75 countries to join in on its new adventure.



The event may have grown in size over the years, but for **André Luís Lourenço**, THU's founder, the aim is still the same:

community and connectivity. "Our goal is to create a platform for creators from all over the world," he says.

The event, which took place over six days in September, featured speakers, workshops, demos, recruitment and the chance for attendees known as the 'tribe' to talk with their art heroes. There was no VIP area here. Speakers like Magic: The Gathering's Cynthia Sheppard, Oculus Story Studio's Goro Fujita and animation director Jorge

“The energy that was going around gave me a huge kick to create and to stay true to myself”



Master illustrator Kim Jung Gi joins fellow artists for a sketching session in the gallery.



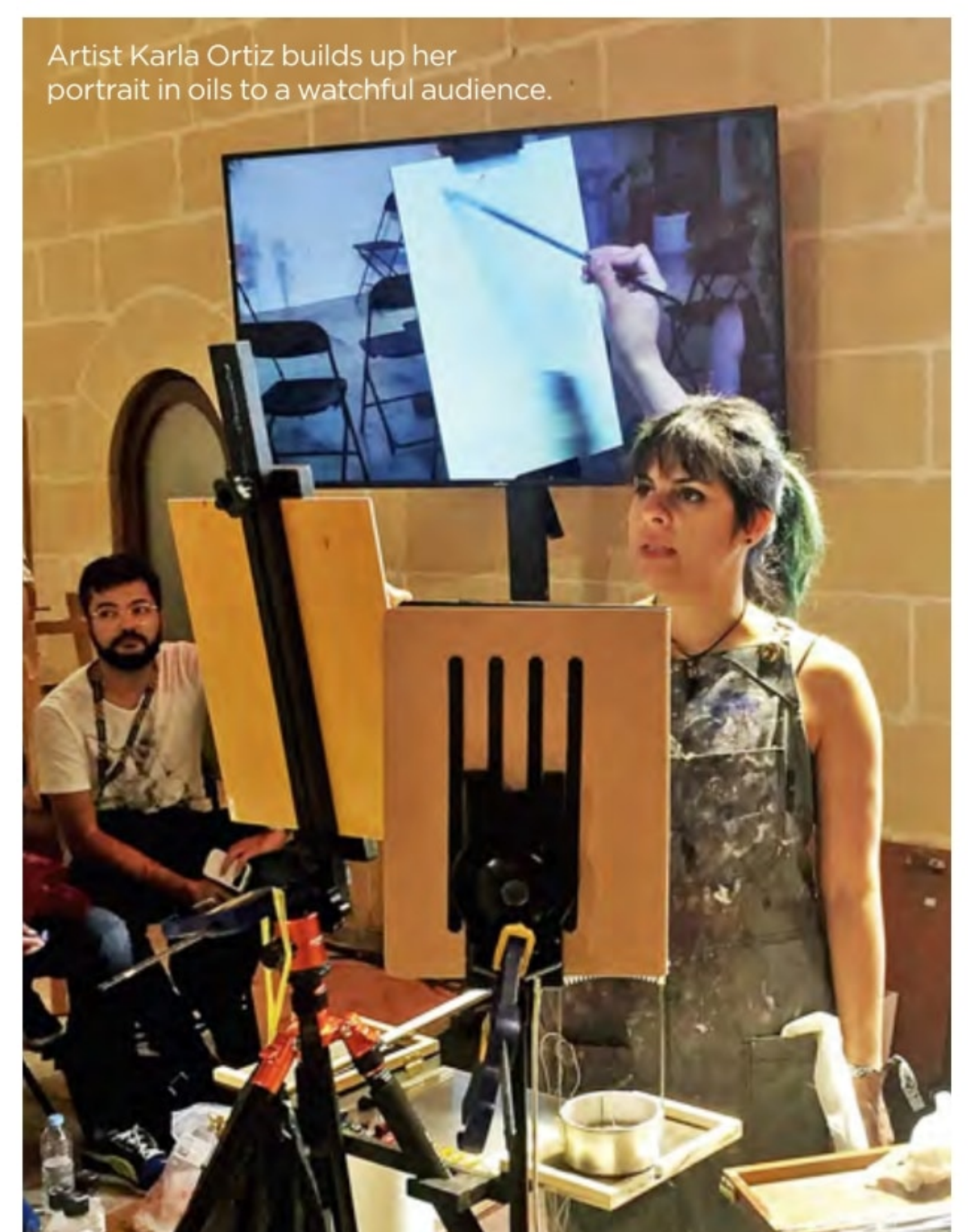




Magic: The Gathering's Cynthia Sheppard delivers her talk about the characteristics an artist needs to a packed-out main hall.



In the recruitment hall artists take guidance on their portfolios and their next career move.



Artist Karla Ortiz builds up her portrait in oils to a watchful audience.



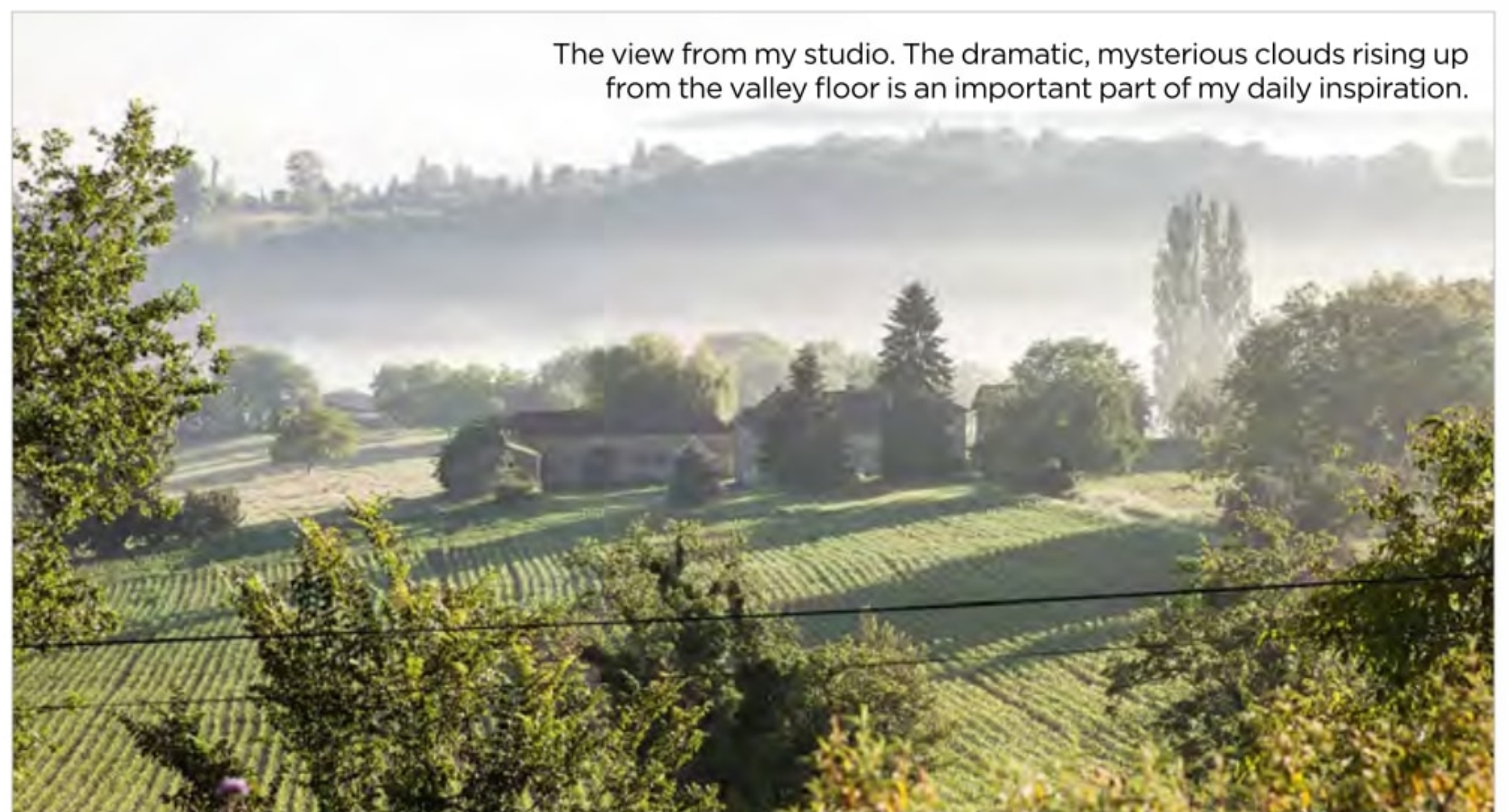
# ImagineNation *Artist in Residence*







Here are some of the portraits that I'm working on, which will feature in my book of stories, called Shaman, Songs of the Goddess.



The view from my studio. The dramatic, mysterious clouds rising up from the valley floor is an important part of my daily inspiration.

## Jean-Sébastien Rossbach

**Rural rocker** The artist talks about his studio that's in the French countryside, and what it's like to be surrounded by nature and echoes of pre-history...

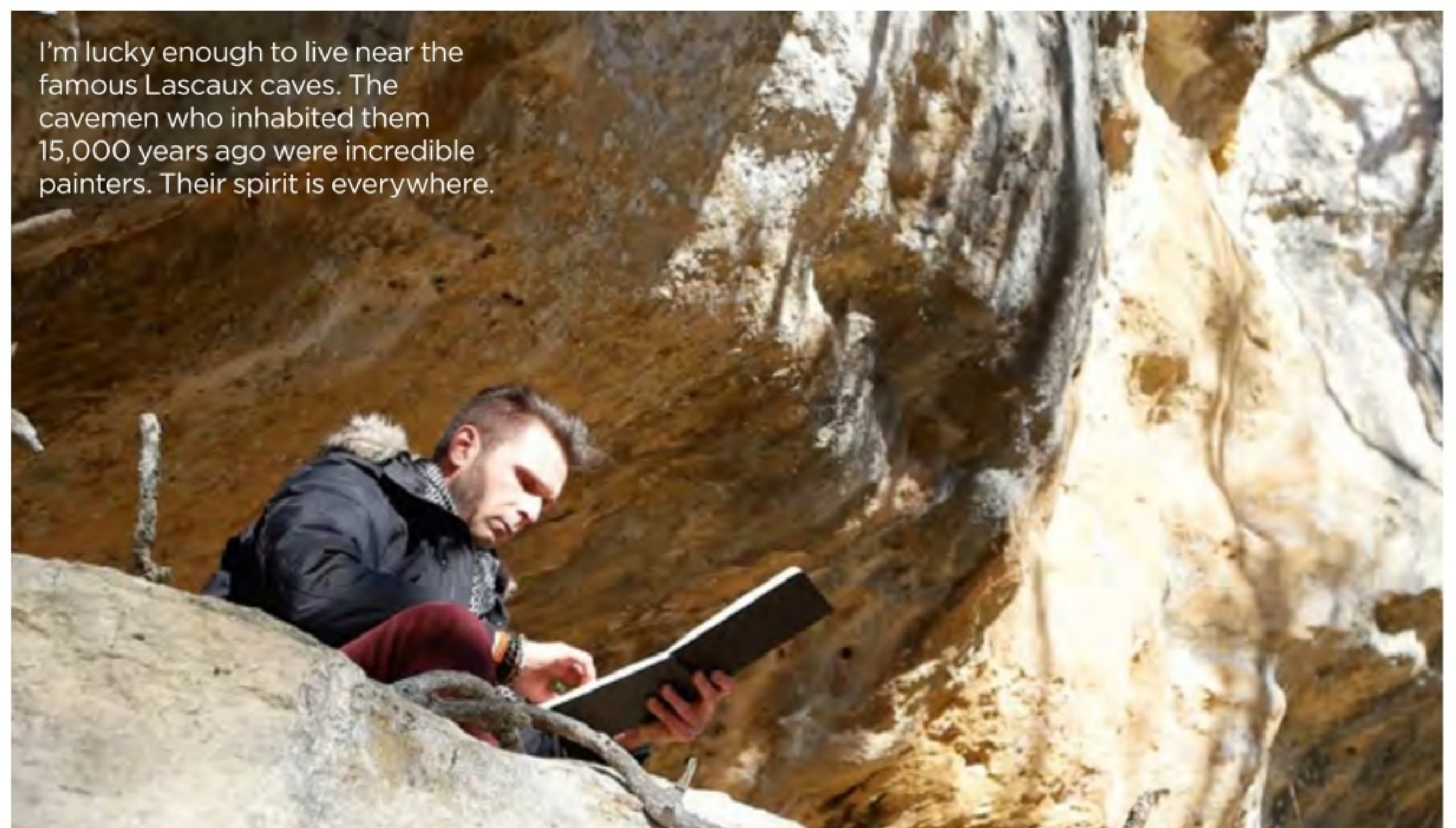


**My studio is in the south-west region of France. It's right in the middle of the area known as the cradle of mankind, because of the abundance of prehistoric caves. It's my attempt to get back to the roots of my artistic calling.**

I used to live in Paris. It was there that I met with clients and steadily developed my career as a professional illustrator. Yet I knew that at some point it would be time for me to get back to the forest – to the boiling pot I grew up in as a kid.

While many city-dwellers dream of spending quality time in an artistic retreat in the country, I decided with my wife, who's also an artist, that this would be our everyday life. While the studio in itself is nothing sophisticated and chic, its location makes it a never-ending source of inspiration.

My daily schedule is one of a hunter-gatherer. I'll often spend the morning outside, wandering in the forest or the countryside with a sketchbook or a camera. I'll return to the studio with a bag full of ideas and sensations that I'll try to get down on paper – after a decent lunch, of course! ➡



I'm lucky enough to live near the famous Lascaux caves. The cavemen who inhabited them 15,000 years ago were incredible painters. Their spirit is everywhere.



# ImagineNation Artist in Residence



My partner Agata Kawa is a contemporary painter, sculptor and a little bit of a shaman, too. Her studio is upstairs from mine.



Paleolithic venus figurines. Ever since my solo exhibition Mother back in 2012, sacred femininity has featured heavily in all of my art projects.

➤➤ The studio itself is divided in three spaces. The first one is dedicated to large-scale paintings, and this is where I keep my easel and shelving furniture. The second area contains a drawing table for working flat with pencils and watercolours, which are my two favourite mediums. Finally, there's an area that I reserve for writing, and for storing everything computer related.

## ONLINE DISTRACTIONS

I found that I really needed to separate the computer from the other workspaces, to avoid the countless

“From my window I can see the passing of the seasons”



distractions that are found online. Furthermore, after spending so many years sitting in a chair, working 10 hours a day on Photoshop, I have chronic backache. That's why I now stand up when I paint or even when I draw at my table.

The two painting rooms have a window to the north, which lets in a cool and constant light. The view was also a key factor when we decided to

A selection of sketches, pochades and various warm-up sketches. I need to surround myself with all sorts of artefacts and amulets. Case in point: the set of goat horns.

settle here. Every artist knows that feeling of being stuck in a rut, spending 80 per cent of their time in the same space, day in, day out. From my window I can see the passing of the seasons. I also have a view of the horizon because we're located on top of a hill, and this to me is priceless.

*Jean-Sébastien has been an illustrator for 15 years, and is keen to tell stories through his art. See more at <https://ifxm.ag/rossbach>.*



# Artist news, software & events

Skulls contain animal spirits. They accompany all my creative activities.

Emylee Receiving the Spirit of Celestial Puma is another painting that will appear in my book Shaman, Songs of the Goddess. It's 150cm tall.

Two cheap bowls fitted with daylight bulbs enable me to paint under good lighting conditions anywhere in my studio.



This is a basket full of old towels and underwear that I use as rags to wipe my brushes. Don't look too closely!

I use lots of different palettes and containers filled with water or other media, depending on what results I want to achieve.

This no-frills hairdryer is my most faithful companion. My studio isn't very tidy, but everything is in its place.



I use my easel mainly for large-scale gouaches or oil paintings, but it can also accommodate dry watercolour and sketch pieces. The painting is of my original character Emylee.



Shaman of Kostenki is a 105x75cm watercolour that will eventually appear in Shaman, Songs of the Goddess. The book was successfully crowd-funded earlier this year.



Here's my fan art of Batari, a character from Far Cry Primal. I don't have time to play video games, so I only discovered her recently. The guys at Ubisoft did an amazing job on this game.



# A day in the life of a concept artist

Sina Hayati takes us through a typical day in the lead-up to him winning the Keyframe category of ArtStation's Wild West Challenge



I'm very grateful to ArtStation for holding the Wild West Challenge. It's a great choice of subject and has inspired myself and many artists to submit their artwork and original designs.

When the ArtStation team asked me to take ImagineFX readers through my typical day as a concept artist, I thought it'd be interesting to talk about my approach to the Wild West Challenge: my sources of inspiration, how I came up with a range of thumbnails, and my painting process. I hope you find it useful!



**8AM** My alarm wakes me up, and after drinking a cup of tea I drive to the studio where I work, to have a decent breakfast with my colleagues. I'm taking some days off to work on the challenge, but still travel to the studio to do my painting there. I share my ideas with my friends and note down their comments and suggestions. Then I browse ArtStation for motivation and inspiration.



**10AM** Now that I have some ideas for the keyframe's storyline I draw some quick thumbnails. During this stage I try to start as fast and simply as I can. My aim is to achieve my desired composition using large shapes and strong silhouettes. Then I'll select two or three of my thumbnails and redraw them as larger greyscale pieces, to check that they capture the mood and storytelling I'm after. Getting the composition right is the biggest challenge in keyframe art. I think films are a great source of reference for composition, especially those directed by Ridley Scott, Spielberg, Tarantino, Tarkovsky and Akira Kurosawa. This stage takes about two hours.



**12PM** Now it's time to find photo and film references for the light and colour that I've indicated in my thumbnails. I've had to do more research than usual for this challenge, because a) I'm not familiar with the Wild West genre, and b) I'm super keen to create an original story!



## WHY ENTER A CHALLENGE?

The ArtStation Community Challenges were created to help artists improve their skills and compete in the spirit of community-based learning. The winners from each category receive a one-year subscription to ArtStation Pro. This enables them to create a professional portfolio website, sell their art on the marketplace, achieve a higher degree of visibility and more.

Sina Hayati's keyframe entry is called Red Valley, and features riders hunting down deadly flying beasts.



One of the group makes a gruesome discovery, in this detail from one of Sina's four keyframe pieces.



**1:30-2PM** I grab a quick bite for lunch. I usually eat on my own, spending the time mulling over the morning's progress.



**2-3PM** I photobash my scene together using the references that I gathered. I play around with colours and values to create my intended mood and feel, and then treat myself to a cup of lemon tea. It's my favourite drink!



**3PM** Now it's time to start on the keyframe art. The process usually starts with an overpaint and I keep doing this until my artwork matches my collection of references, in terms of perspective, character poses and colour palette.



**6PM** My day work usually ends around this time. I make sure to post my day's progress on the challenge submission's page, to obtain comments and feedback from other ArtStation members and my fellow challengers. Then I leave the studio, head off to the gym and work out for an hour.



**8PM** I get back home, take a shower and then make my dinner. Then I watch a film or play some video games, before calling it a day and going to bed at 11pm.



GET INVOLVED AT [WWW.ARTSTATION.COM/CONTESTS](http://WWW.ARTSTATION.COM/CONTESTS)



# Letters

## YOUR FEEDBACK & OPINIONS



Contact the editor, Claire Howlett, on [claire@imaginefx.com](mailto:claire@imaginefx.com) or write to ImagineFX, Future Publishing, Quay House, The Ambury, Bath, BA1 1UA, England



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### More Painter please

I enjoyed Magdalena Proszowska's workshop on Corel Painter (issue 166). I'd like to see more Painter articles in future issues of ImagineFX.

I also enjoyed Kelly McKernan's watercolour series. I disagree with some of your other readers who have stated that they wanted a digital-only art magazine. I think the diversity is the strength of your magazine.

I also remembered that you had a black and white issue some time ago. Will you revisit that topic again in the future? Keep up the good work.

**Mark Abramowsky, via email**

**Claire replies** Mark, we're always up for putting more Corel Painter workshop in the magazine. I'll get on that right away. As for Kelly McKernan, I've been a fan of hers for a while so I loved getting her to create a watercolour skills series for us. We're truly blessed with the calibre of artists who share their process with us. Black and white issue? Great call! I wonder who we can get to do our black and white cover this time around? Do any of you have some suggestions as to who we can ask?

### Here's to animation artists!

Awesome job with ImagineFX! I've been a follower of your magazine for a

Our recent watercolour series, and our black and white issue featuring Charlie Bowater's cover art went down well with Mark Abramowsky.



**DID YOU MISS THE PREVIOUS PACKED ISSUE?**

Don't worry – you can still get hold of it. Visit <http://ifxm.ag/167-ifx> for details.



Bobby Chiu put together a workshop for us back in issue 72. This lil' critter scampered its way on to the cover!

couple of years now, and it's always an inspiring read.

ImagineFX features a wide range of artists from the digital and traditional art world. However, I've noticed that not much is done to feature animation artists. While concept art and all is great, it's vital to note that every single frame in animation (2D or 3D) is an artwork. There are lots of character and environment digital artists in the art department of animation studios worldwide, as well as freelancers who are producing great stuff, and I'd like to see their art direction pipeline process in 2D or 3D animation.

A good place to find industry professionals of this kind is Schoolism (artists include Bobby Chiu, Wouter Tulp, Daniel Arriaga, Dice Tsutsumi and Nathan Fowkes). These guys create the believable worlds we see and love on the big screen animation shows. There are many other artists from prominent animation schools such as Gobelins in France whose works are absolutely stunning. You can find them on Vimeo or YouTube. An example is Cécile Carre who created the fantastic animated short film titled Burn Out.

I hope that you and your amazing team can look into these considerations going forward.

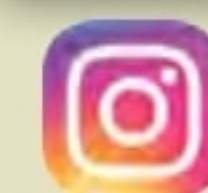
**Harry Dunkwu, via email**

**Claire replies** While animation isn't something we would feature every single month, it is certainly something that's been in ImagineFX many times. I also appreciate that not all of you would have read every issue of ImagineFX! Bobby Chiu used to be a much-loved regular contributor to ImagineFX in our early editions and we have also featured Nathan Fowkes, as well as animation artists such as Armand Serrano and Randy Bishop.

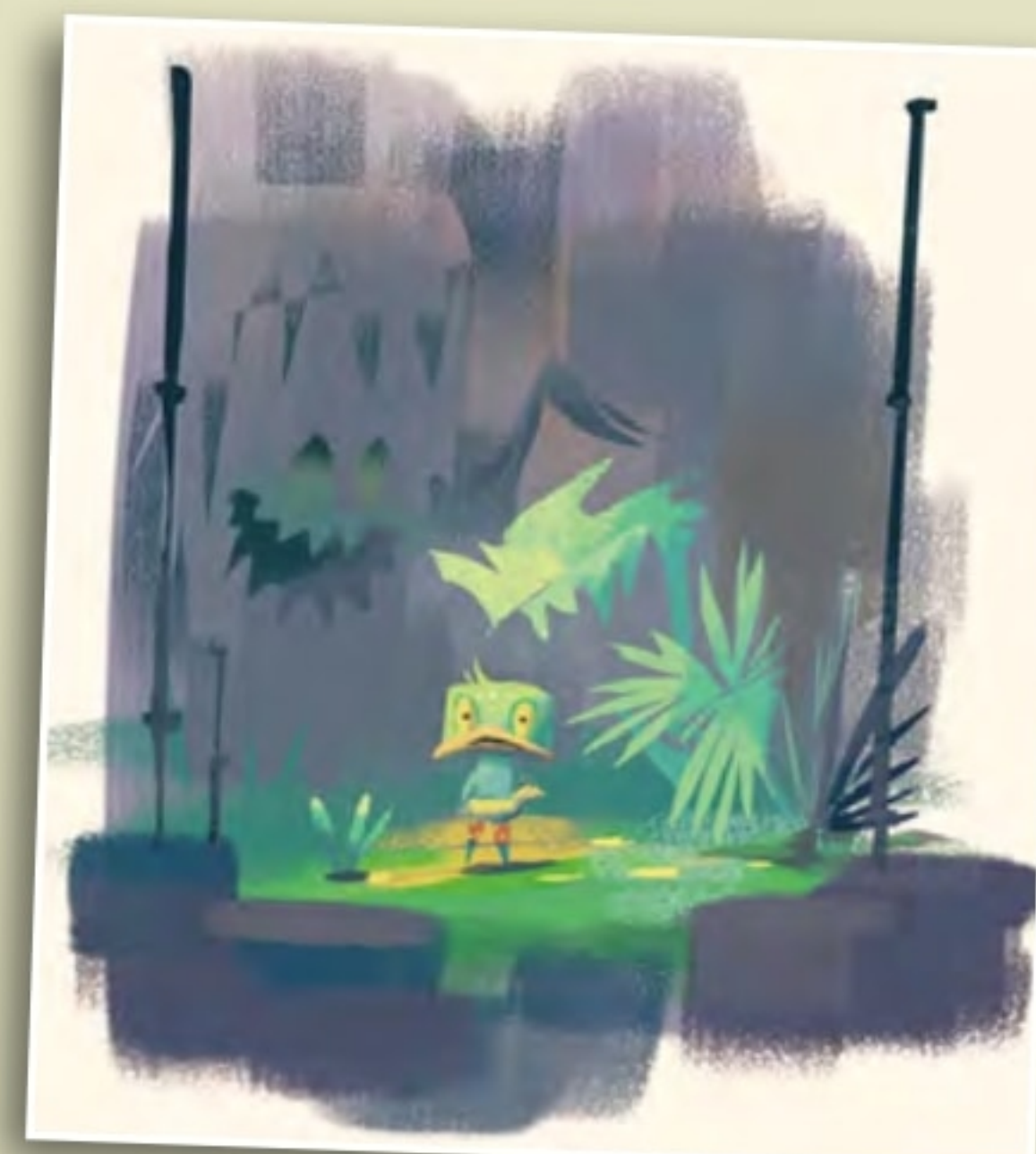
We have had numerous animation issues, but we've not featured all of the artists you've mentioned, so I'll take on board your suggestions for our future animation issues. Thanks for emailing in, Harry!



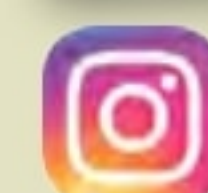
New works that have grabbed our attention



**mkmiec.art**  
**@mkmiec.art**



**Alexander Johnson**  
**@AJohanson89**



**Eeva Nikunen**  
**@eevanikunen**

If you've created art that you want us to shout about simply tag us on Twitter or Instagram, or find us on Facebook!



# Artist Portfolio

## NIV-MESSET, THE FIREMIND

This was painted in 2011 for an earlier card set. Bored with mortal reality, he's a dragon Svetlin identifies with.



All Magic: The Gathering images © Wizards of the Coast 2018



IMAGINEFX

Christmas 2018





Interview Svetlin Velinov

*Artist Portfolio*

# SVETLIN VELINOV

The conjurer of goblins, dragons and powerful mages is one of Magic: The Gathering's best-known illustrators. **Garrick Webster** catches him during a rare quiet spell...





## ENLIGHTENMENT

The outstanding detail in Temple of Enlightenment enriches the game for players. The card also hints towards Svetlin's Ancient Greece influences.

The email arrived in 2009. Svetlin Velinov didn't recognise the sender's name, and neither did he understand the header, which simply read: "Magic Cards". Little did the Bulgarian illustrator and concept artist realise that its contents would change the course of his artistic career. He clicked to open it.

The message itself was just as cryptic: "Would you be interested/available to paint some cards?"

## Artist PROFILE

**Svetlin Velinov**

**LOCATION:** Bulgaria

**FAVOURITE ARTISTS:** Paul Bonner, Pieter Bruegel, Karl Brulov, Greg Capullo, Dave Finch, Jon Foster, Frank Frazetta, Francisco Goya, Phil Hale, Jim Lee, Michaelangelo, Greg Mullins, Steven Platt, Rembrandt, Ilya Repin, Wayne Reynolds, Ivan Shishkin, Marc Sylvestri and Mikhail Vrubel

**SOFTWARE USED:** Photoshop

**WEB:** www.velinov.com

"'Why not?' I thought to myself. It sounds like fun. The sender was art director Jeremy Jarvis, the game was Magic: The Gathering, and the client was Wizards of the Coast," says Svetlin. "The story continues to this day. M:TG is my main occupation, and over 200 cards have been published with my illustrations on them. That's quite an achievement."

More cards are being added to Svetlin's Magic portfolio all the time. For the latest release, Guilds of Ravnica, he's painted eight new cards including quirky little hustlers like Maximize Velocity and Goblin Cratermaker, as well as the more serious League Guildmage and a muscular-looking version of a 15,000-year-old dragon called Niv-Mizzet.

## LAYERS OF DETAIL

Unusually for him, he's created two of the game's mana cards for the upcoming Guild Kit addition, which arrives just as this issue of ImagineFX



## SQUEE

With the ability to come back from the graveyard, Squee the Immortal is a pest for opponents, something Svetlin captures in the character's artwork.

hits the stores. In typical Velinov fashion, he's brought layers of detail to a Forest card that sees a tower of fungus invading an old ruin, and a Mountain card depicting Ravnica's menacing architecture. It's almost as though the enchanted building is turning into a giant landform.

There's no way that the 54mm-wide image area on a typical Magic card ➡





## RED MOON

An early milestone, Red Moon is an image Svetlin posted to CGTalk in 2004 after he first went freelance, and it got people talking about his work.



## SCHEMING

Tiagam's Schemer from the Khans of Tarkir set in 2014 shows that it's not all about monsters and raw power in Svetlin's portfolio.

“Over 200 Magic cards have been published with my illustrations on them. That's quite an achievement”



## BOLTSPLICER MAGE

Magical energy is a theme in Svetlin's paintings for the Guilds of Ravnica set. He's so pleased with this one that he's offering it as a Giclée print on his site.



# Artist Portfolio

## NICOL BOLAS, THE ARISEN

Could this be the ultimate Planeswalker card, accompanied with the ultimate artwork?







## EERIE INTERLUDE

Creating the right atmosphere was the key to this card art for the Shadows Over Innistrad expansion set from 2016.

➡ can do justice to Svetlin's work. For him, the secret is to think beyond the parameters of the layout. "I like to inject life into the characters and the scenes they're in," says Svetlin. "There wouldn't be 41 goblins in Goblin Rabblemaster, or fishermen sewing their nets and children jumping into the sea in the artwork for Temple of Enlightenment if I were thinking about the constraints of a two-inch canvas. There wouldn't be the details like a thief being chased or a wizard with his dwarf companion in Simic Guildgate. The characters aren't just there in the scene – they speak and communicate their roles in this fantasy world."

The nuances are where Svetlin's passion will charm you, but it's his compositions that will grab your

“I'll work from a detailed description. There's no room for improvisation”



## VISCERAL

These crazy beasts from the Dominaria set were painted with fast brushstrokes to convey their wild intent.

attention. For every player who tries to count all the goblins that spring from the pipes in Goblin Rabblemaster, another will be bowled over by the majestic beauty of paintings like Nicol Bolas, The Arisen. Dragons like this are where he excels. As the game's most powerful Elder Dragon, Bolas is one of its defining characters and painting him is always a big responsibility.

"There's no room for improvisation. I'll work from a detailed description of the character that includes the location, action and state of mind, and the overall impact of the illustration. Here, the teamwork between the artist and art director is most visible, and it's up to the artist to interpret the description in their own way so that Bolas is credible, alive, full of emotion and part of a story," explains Svetlin.

## FOLLOWING ART DIRECTION

From the seriousness of a dragon, Svetlin slips effortlessly to his more humorous goblin creations. Beasts like Goreclaw and Bristling Boar are full of visceral energy and are rendered in spontaneous brush strokes, while artwork like Eerie Interlude brings a sense of realism and an enveloping atmosphere. Svetlin's versatility and his ability to give depth to any card are what keep the art directors happy.

Although it constitutes the bulk of his work, M:TG isn't his only ➡



## GOBLIN RABBLEMASTER

Packed with goblins, each with his own story, and led by the Rabblemaster.



## COUNT THE GOBLINS

These nasty little guys are Svetlin Velinov's calling card for Magic players

With their beady eyes, big warty noses and cunning mouths, the goblins Svetlin Velinov paints for Magic: The Gathering are instantly recognisable. There's menace, and something quite demented about each and every one he creates, but they also convey the artist's humour.

"I have a strong connection with these crazy creatures," says Svetlin. "I get enormous pleasure when I'm commissioned to paint them. Each one develops previous goblins I've created and, keeping to the brief, I introduce new features. It helps me make my goblins distinguishable and unique."

One example is the recent Guilds of Ravnica card Goblin Rabblemaster. The brief asked for a goblin dressed in armour producing other goblins that appear out of holes.

"I could easily have got by with a composition showing a main character in the foreground and several supporting characters as silhouettes in the background, but I never approach artwork that way," explains Svetlin. "I wanted to challenge players and fans and so I painted a total of 41 goblins for them to count. Each has its own character for you to contemplate and speculate about."

## CRATERMAKER

If a goblin made a suicide vest, what would it look like?







## CHAINWHIRLER

Goblin Chainwhirler from the Dominaria set earlier this year. It's a favourite with players who prefer the ferocity of a red deck.



## INGENIOUS ARTISTRY

In his illustration of Daretti, Ingenious Iconoclast, Svetlin packs as much detail into the background he does the foreground figure.



## RUFFIANS

In cards like Grenzo's Ruffians, we can see a nod towards Svetlin's creative influences such as Paul Bonner.





## LEAGUE GUILDIMAGE

One thing Svetlin has noted about his work is that he rarely gets to create female characters, but he painted this figure for the recent Guilds of Ravnica set.

➡ creative outlet and Svetlin is keen not to get into a rut. Trained at Bulgaria's National School of the Arts Dobri Hristov and later at the New Bulgarian University, he worked as a graphic designer and an animator before becoming a freelance illustrator in 2002. A few years back, he created concepts for a game called Almighty

will inspire other artists who walk the same road," he says.

Svetlin is based in Varna, which is on the Black Sea. It's a lively place with a carnival atmosphere in the summer, but gets rather sleepy in the winter, which is when Svetlin works best. What he feels he's missing there is the medieval Christian architecture found

“As a child I was impressed by the Greek myths... maybe in the future this will be the basis of a project for me”

Dragon, although the project didn't see the light of day. Right now he's working with the video game developer Valve and M:TC's designer Richard Garfield on Artifact, a digital card game.

"Every artist should put aside some time for personal projects and IPs as well. I've never published an art book, but the time seems right for a time machine that includes work from across my professional career. Maybe it

in Western Europe. Much of it was destroyed during the Ottoman period.

However, centuries before the Ottomans, part of Bulgaria was in the Ancient Greek kingdom of Thracia. It's from this tradition that Svetlin has drawn inspiration. "As a child I was impressed by the Greek myths," he says. "Wars between the gods, heroes, demi-gods, evil creatures, gorgons, chimera, Cyclops and giants – it was



## NIV-MIZZET, PERUN

Seven years later, Svetlin repainted Niv-Mizzet for the Perun card. A blink of an eye in the life of a dragon that's 15,000 years old.

good versus evil. Everything is there and maybe in the future this will be the basis of a project for me."

That's if he ever gets to take a break from Magic: The Gathering. "I've been tempted to get into film production and in the past few years film franchises have gained momentum. That would be an interesting challenge," he says. Who knows, maybe there'll be a film based on Magic... ●



## OLD SOUL

In this personal sketch Svetlin ponders mortality, and the meaning of life.



## SVETLIN'S SKETCHPAD

Without self-initiated work, life would grow stale for a fantasy artist. So how does Svetlin avoid losing interest in his work?

Whenever he gets the opportunity, Svetlin Velinov enjoys expressing himself by creating personal work: digital sketches that explore new themes and emotions. It gives him a sense of freedom.

In his latest piece, Old Soul, he looks at black and white, good and evil and the question of whether there's life after death, or indeed whether or not we're truly living while we're alive. "I make sure that there's a

story behind each drawing, with no pretence. It's a way of expressing myself. Maybe I'm the only one who will understand the meaning, but hopefully other people will look at the picture and it will provoke questions."

Nature is another theme Svetlin's explored, and again notions of life and death come to the fore. "Nature is a cycle," he explains. "It can be beautiful in life and



## MOTHER NATURE

There's a hint of green magic in this personal work where Svetlin looks at beauty present in life and death.



## BLOOD JUNGLE

Child soldiers is a moving political subject that Svetlin has picked up on in his personal illustration work.

ugly in death, but equally it can be ugly in life and beautiful in death."

Sometimes moral and political questions inspire him and in 2012 he painted Blood Jungle, which is about the horrors faced by child soldiers in Somalia. It was going to be part of a project that Svetlin didn't manage to finish, but inequality, cruelty and terror are topics that move him and sometimes he expresses this in his art.



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December 2018

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### Issue 166

November 2018

Learn to paint an ethereal portrait, a group of adventurers and a war beast in our fantasy special issue. Tran Nguyen passes on her tips for honing your artistic prowess and we check out the latest Magic: The Gathering card set.



### Issue 165

October 2018

In our packed animation issue, pro artists pass on their advice on how to break into the industry. There's tips on posing, rendering, storyboarding and character design, and we talk to Disney legend Armand Serrano.



### Issue 164

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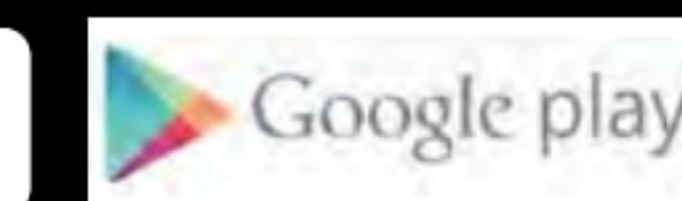
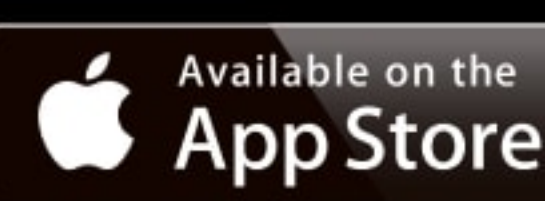


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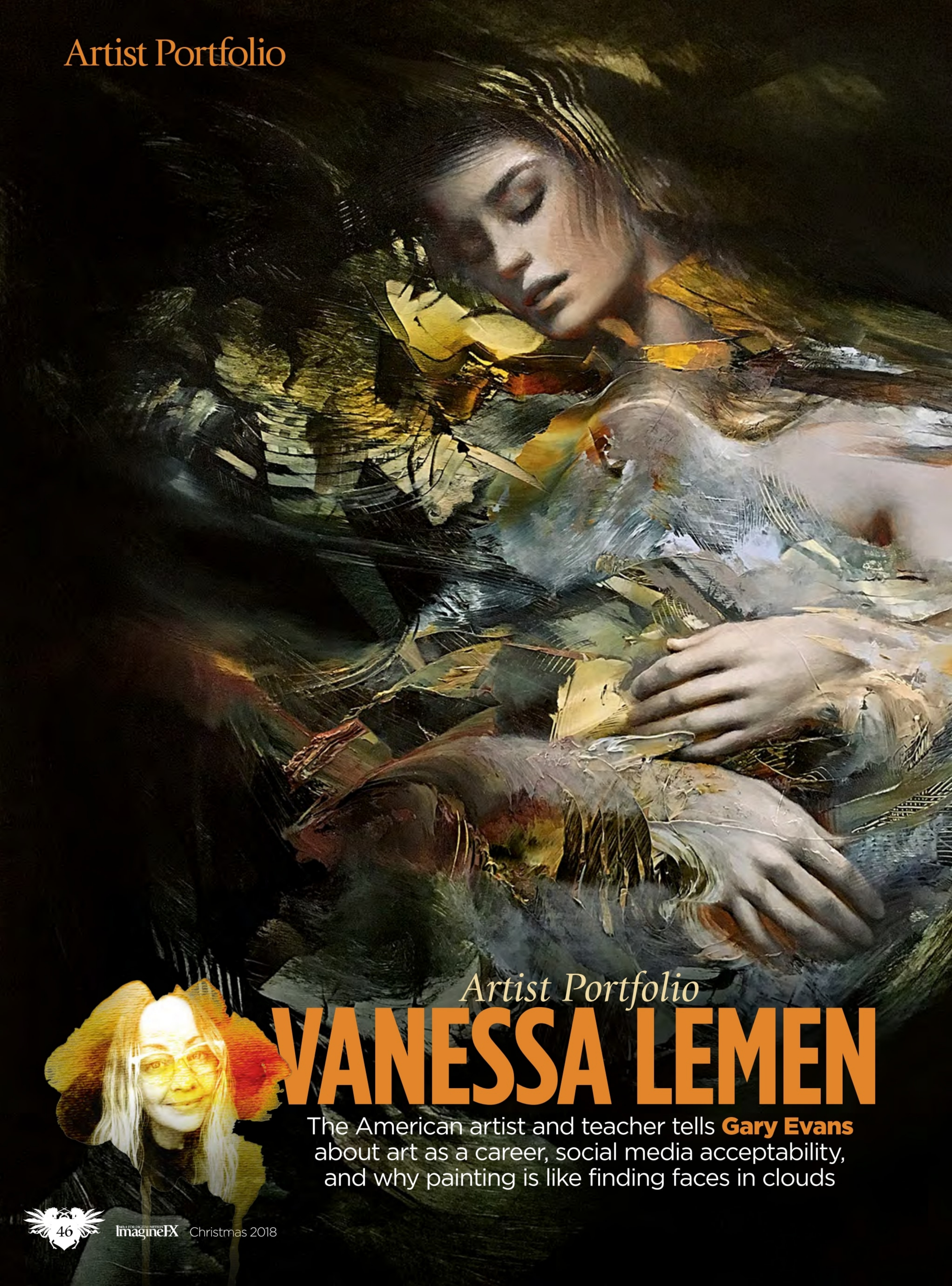
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Artist Portfolio

# VANESSA LEMEN

The American artist and teacher tells **Gary Evans** about art as a career, social media acceptability, and why painting is like finding faces in clouds







# Interview Vanessa Lemen

“Subtlety is an amazing thing. When something is subtle it can feel as if it’s gone unnoticed. But then you find yourself drawn into it...”

**D**uring a recent interview, Vanessa Lemen was asked why she decided to “pursue” a career in art. The American said that painting was just what she did. It was what she wanted to keep doing, even if nobody ever paid her to do it. She never decided to pursue anything.

Vanessa used her column for the fantasy art site Muddy Colors to elaborate on her career in art so far. In high school, she painted huge

Christmas displays at a grocery store and made big murals of album covers on the walls of a record shop. In her 20s, she worked as an illustrator and layout artist at a craft supplies place.

After college, she went to work for an advertising agency, then spent almost a decade at a greeting cards company. She did other jobs, including being a file clerk and a waitress, but at night she always went home and worked on her own stuff. None of these jobs involved making the kind of art she

## WITHIN/WITHOUT

“And life flows on within you and without you.”  
Vanessa Lemen provides a vision of the world within and without you.

was into personally, the work she’s known for now: a dreamy, sometimes nightmarish mix of abstract shapes, abstract worlds, figure painting, portraiture and fantasy.

So when Vanessa is asked a similar question about her education in art – two universities, another two community colleges, various ateliers and workshops – she replies with a similar response.

“If you want a list of schools I’ve gone to,” she says, “I can provide ➤➤➤”





## LETTERS TO A YOUNG POET

"A painting inspired by the book Letters To A Young Poet. It was written by Rainer Maria Rilke, the poet and novelist, to a young poet trying to find his way."



## FIERY MIND

"She is a fiery mind, a fiery heart. She is a reflection. I can look at her face and see our story there."

by way of a subtle invitation. That subtle invitation left it up to you to decide whether to engage or not, and once you do, how you will engage is open as well.

"Or ambiguity could very well be what the draw is. The unknown is always a curious draw, and if we can remain open while stepping into the unknown, that leaves so much room to explore and discover. To those who are always seeking, and even to those who find themselves drawn in unexpectedly, the unknown or unexplained has that pull. It ➤➤

➤➤ that, but it's the combination of those college experiences, as well as my work and life experiences, that has made me who I am.

## ALWAYS EVOLVING

"My education history is pretty diverse and eclectic," Vanessa continues. "I think that's really helped shape what my art became and also what it can become – the notion that it still has the opportunity or potential to become something that's evolved from what it is currently. I think that comes from my eclectic background. I guess I've never been one to feel as if my

## COURAGE IS A SHAPESHIFTER

"We're all shapeshifters when we need to be, and it takes courage sometimes, but it's possible. It's essential. We owe it to ourselves to do this."

education will ever stop. I hope to continue to learn and evolve and grow as long as I live."

Much of Vanessa's work is portraiture. She often paints her subjects with restrained facial expressions. There's a subtlety to her work, an ambiguity, a sense that she wants the viewer to do some of the work. Is this a hard skill to hone?

"It's not a skill to hone. It's a way of being. All of us have the ability to give the viewer the benefit of the doubt. Not all of us do it, but all of us have the capacity to. Subtlety is an amazing thing. When something is subtle it can feel as if it's gone unnoticed. But then you find yourself drawn into it – not knowing why, but feeling as if you'd made that choice to go there. Because you have. You were drawn in

“ My education history is pretty diverse and eclectic. That's helped shape my art ”

## Artist PROFILE

**Vanessa Lemen**

**LOCATION:** US

**FAVOURITE ARTISTS:** Zdzisław Beksiński, James Gleeson, Gustav Klimt, Andrew Wyeth, and Vachagan Narazyan

**MEDIA USED:** Oils applied with silicon spatulas and sable brushes

**WEB:** [www.vanessalemenart.com](http://www.vanessalemenart.com)



## A FACE IN THE CLOUDS

Vanessa explains how she turned abstract marks into a stunning portrait

### 1 MARK-MAKING AND ABSTRACTION

"This is how I generally start a painting – by making marks and abstract shapes. I continue to carve out and paint in, wipe away, splatter and drip mineral spirits, and most times I use more than one colour, but for this particular piece, I only used Burnt umber. Also, I turn the painting in different directions while I work. This is mainly an experiment-and-discover stage, while it loosens and frees me up as well. When I say, I saw something in the marks,' I mean it in the way that it's similar to how we see familiar forms in clouds."



### 2 THE IMAGE WITHIN THE ABSTRACT

"This stage is about finding the image within the abstract, laying in the shapes and beginning to model the forms. What I saw was a figure swooping into the picture plane: arms, hands and head, with what looks like the hood of a cloak or an interesting hair shape. What I saw in the marks initially was a shape of a face in the centre of that dark abstract cloak-like shape, with one eye socket very dark, so my first marks were to give it the other eye socket, and then down the bridge of the nose, and so on."



### 3 DEVELOPMENT OF THE FORMS

"I'm blocking in small areas within the larger shapes. This shows the development of the form – from a quick scumbling in of large shapes ghosted on top of the dry underpainting's abstract shapes, to the smaller areas within the big shapes. I used a few round sables for these areas, mostly dry brushing in thin layers to build up varying degrees of opacity. At this point I've still mainly been using only Burnt umber and White with a little bit of Transparent red iron oxide added in some areas. I'll be adding some colour to the painting once some areas have dried a bit."

### 4 FINISHING BRUSHWORK

"I want to maintain much of the texture in the underpainting in some areas, while in other areas I look to build up thicker paint or more layers in order to have more opacity and have less of the underpainting show through. This stage is about building the form up in the hands and face, glazing some colour in both the background/abstract areas, as well as the face and hands, and feathering edges in some areas."





**RAYEN**

"Rayen is a flower; beautiful, intricate, curious and elusive in that she's seemingly fragile, but amazingly resilient and strong."



➤ piques our interest and manages to hold us there. To not know is an amazing and wonderful place to be. Our best results have come from the what ifs, hows and whys."

## NO PLAN, JUST MARKS

Vanessa always begins a piece by making marks. There's no plan. She uses various tools, surfaces, materials, tries this and that, and then paints into the marks until faces appear in these abstractions. It's the same way faces appear in clouds if you stare long enough. "As they develop, they morph and shape-shift into what eventually becomes the finished image."

She starts several paintings at the same time and surrounds herself with them so images constantly reveal

themselves in different forms. Multiple paintings help her "shake off all the outside stuff." They enable her to get her into a groove.

Just like when she was at the greeting cards company, regardless of what else she has to do, Vanessa works on her art every single day – usually all day and most of the night. But some days are spent on the business of being a working artist: framing, packing, shipping, getting ready for a gallery show, doing magazine interviews in which the interviewer asks endless questions about her routine. But a day full of nothing but painting is always a great day.

She starts early, 6am, feeds the cats, makes tea, and goes upstairs to her loft studio. It's an open space – "comfy and

## TO RISE AGAIN

"Things are continuously changing and evolving, always keeping us on our toes, quietly preparing us for moments of adversity."

**FIONA**

"Spawned from grit and texture in the midst of the Season of Fire, the radiant Fiona emerges unscathed."



well-used" – overlooking the downstairs living room. It's always full of paintings in various stages of completion (some are still wet), various racks and shelves used to dry them off, bookcases full of books, lights to light them, a desk to work at, a sofa to chill on, and often a cat or two curled up sleeping. Her husband is the artist Ron Lemen and he also works upstairs at home. They often nip ➤

“As they develop, they morph and shape-shift into what eventually becomes the finished image”



**KOMPASI TWINS**

"The Kompasi Twins are complements to one another, and their balance is essential to their existence."



## THE MANY FACES OF BOB NANNINGA

Vanessa describes why this portrait of her late friend felt like a breakthrough moment

"I lost count at some point, but I believe there are well over a hundred Bob faces in this painting. When I painted this, I saw him every day even though he had just passed away. I painted him the way I saw him in this new way of experiencing his existence – which was in the shapes and the abstractions of everything around me, especially in the trees – because that's where he would be, and that's where I still see him.

"Why was it a breakthrough? It was by doing this painting that I was reminded he's still with me, but in a different and new way. It's not the same anymore, and it never will be the same as it was in the past. I was also reminded that I can go anywhere, be anything, and be with anyone by painting. I can be with someone in the future or the past, too, just by the act of painting. I can connect with someone whom I may have never met or maybe will never meet in person by painting. I can create spaces I may have never been to and places that are very familiar, and I can go there when I paint."



### FOR A FRIEND

Vanessa painted her friend Bob Nanninga several times before his death in 2009. She did this piece after his passing for the Artists by Artists exhibition in Encinitas, California, later that year.



### MIITU (MUCH STANDS BEHIND ME)

Vanessa was inspired by the words of Rilke: "My life is not this steeply sloping hour, in which you see me hurrying. Much stands behind me; I stand before it like a tree..."

➤➤ into each other's studio to talk about ideas and ongoing painting and to eat together. She'll take a break to eat and run errands and tries to exercise every day, does some yoga, and meditates. Then it's back to the studio, usually till late.

Vanessa has a few notes pinned up around her studio: "Everything could've been anything else," one note says. Another reads, "Don't mistake your next opportunity for a distraction." Then there are reminders in the form of mantras: "Construct your experiences differently" and "Embrace your responsibility."

### JOURNAL OF ART

Vanessa keeps a sketchbook and journals. She draws and writes about her surroundings. Sometimes they end up in her paintings, sometimes not. Writing is as much a part of her daily routine as painting. "Our body of work is the span of our lifetime," she says. "Each painting is like a paragraph or chapter in a novel that is being perpetually written. They're reflections of ourselves, and projections of our personal perspective, views, and voice. The images I create are excerpts from my personal journey, usually described through metaphorical imagery, highlighting humanity using the figure as an integral part of the story."

Vanessa uses social media in an interesting way. She sees it as a way of





## HOLDING ON AND LETTING GO

Inspired by the 13th century poet Rumi's "Life is a balance between holding on and letting go."



## HARMONY IN THE EBB AND FLOW

"Harmony speaks of the strength we find within ourselves. Often it's elevated by way of embracing the unity with others."

"curating one's presence." You decide what you show of yourself, the same way you'd decide what to show of your work at a gallery. It's good for promotion and keeping up to date with what other artists are doing. But while social media is a distraction for most of us, Vanessa uses it to ensure she's not slacking. It's a "good source of accountability." It helps her maintain



## AYANAA

Vanessa believes that, "Many time, the best way to see is to not use your eyes at all."

“Our body of work is the span of our lifetime. Each painting is a chapter in a novel that’s being perpetually written”

her work ethic by encouraging her to regularly make and share new stuff.

Vanessa and Ron started running their art school-studio in Carlsbad, California, in the early 2000s, and teaching has become a big part of both of their careers. They teach classical foundation drawing and painting, design, and illustration. They also tour these classes around the US. Teaching has taught Vanessa a lot about how to be a better artist. It's given her some insight on what separates good work from great work.

"I've learned so much from teaching, and sometimes I think back to my early college years about who I was as a student then, because so much of what I hear as an instructor reminds me of so many of my experiences at that time.

"I think what separates great art from good art is when it has that 'something' which moves us," Vanessa says. "And art can be moving for many reasons: it can be amazing in technical skill and craft; and it can stir emotions and be thought-provoking. Or it can be both. Or many other things. I think that's what makes something great as opposed to just good: when we can be moved by it."

Vanessa ended her Muddy Colors column by saying that her approach today isn't much different to her approach when she was painting Christmas displays at the grocery store: it's art during the day and art at night. Her education is ongoing. But she isn't pursuing anything. Painting is just what she does. ●



## Eliza Ivanova

When not working on animations at Pixar, this artist spends time filling her sketchbook with shamans, cyborgs and simians

### Artist PROFILE

**Eliza Ivanova**  
LOCATION: US



Eliza was born and raised in Sofia, Bulgaria. She was classically trained as a fine artist. After high school, Eliza moved to Los

Angeles to pursue an animation education at Calarts where she graduated in 2010 with a degree in character animation. Eliza was invited to do an internship at Pixar and has been a 3D animator there since. She has made award-winning short films and has a new one in development.  
[www.elizaivanova.com](http://www.elizaivanova.com)

#### WINGS

"I did this piece as a tutorial for a short story. I had to depict the moment a woman realises she's going through a transformation that's out of this world, which was her gaining a pair of wings. It was a piece about anguish mixed with awe."

#### CATCH OF THE DAY

"One of the cities I grew up in was a fishing town and going to the market to pick up the freshest catch of the day was a weekly event. I remember being both repulsed by the smell, but also fascinated by the variety of sea creatures, and the fishermen whose livelihood depended on the sea."



“I was repulsed by the smell, but also fascinated by the variety of creatures”



## LIFELINE

"A life's journey in the form of a single thread that can break at any moment."

## FERAL

"A wild woman literally and figuratively. I enjoy drawing women who are nude but not sexualised, because it's still a visual paradox in this day and age: why would she be naked if she her nudity isn't being exploited? A naked female doing mundane things, like a stroll in the forest, is a wild concept apparently, thus why I called her a feral character."

## OCEAN

"This was one of the pieces I did for Inktober 2017. The entire series was based on music I liked, and this particular sketch represents an image that often flashes in my head when I'm distressed, like a happy place of some sort."



# Sketchbook

“A little girl,  
with the help of  
a mighty crane is  
able to soar above  
everything”



**MAJOR  
MOTOKO**

“A fan piece for one of my  
favourite animated films,  
Ghost in the Shell.”





## CRANE

"This was a charity piece. It represents longevity and the endless possibilities for a little girl, who with the help of a mighty crane is able to soar above everything."



## INITIATION

"A boy enters a new age, and his initiation is a reminder of mortality to strengthen his will and to learn not to waste his time."

## EVOLUTION

"Another Inktober piece inspired by Pearl Jam's Do the Evolution. It's about man's failing attempts to turn an ape into a human-like creature by simultaneously expanding and enslaving the mind of the primate."





# Sketchbook

## ORC LEADER

"These charming fellas were done for Even Amundsen's wonderful book Tegn. It was an honour to be one of the guest artists."

“I’m interested in communities that keep ancient practices alive...”



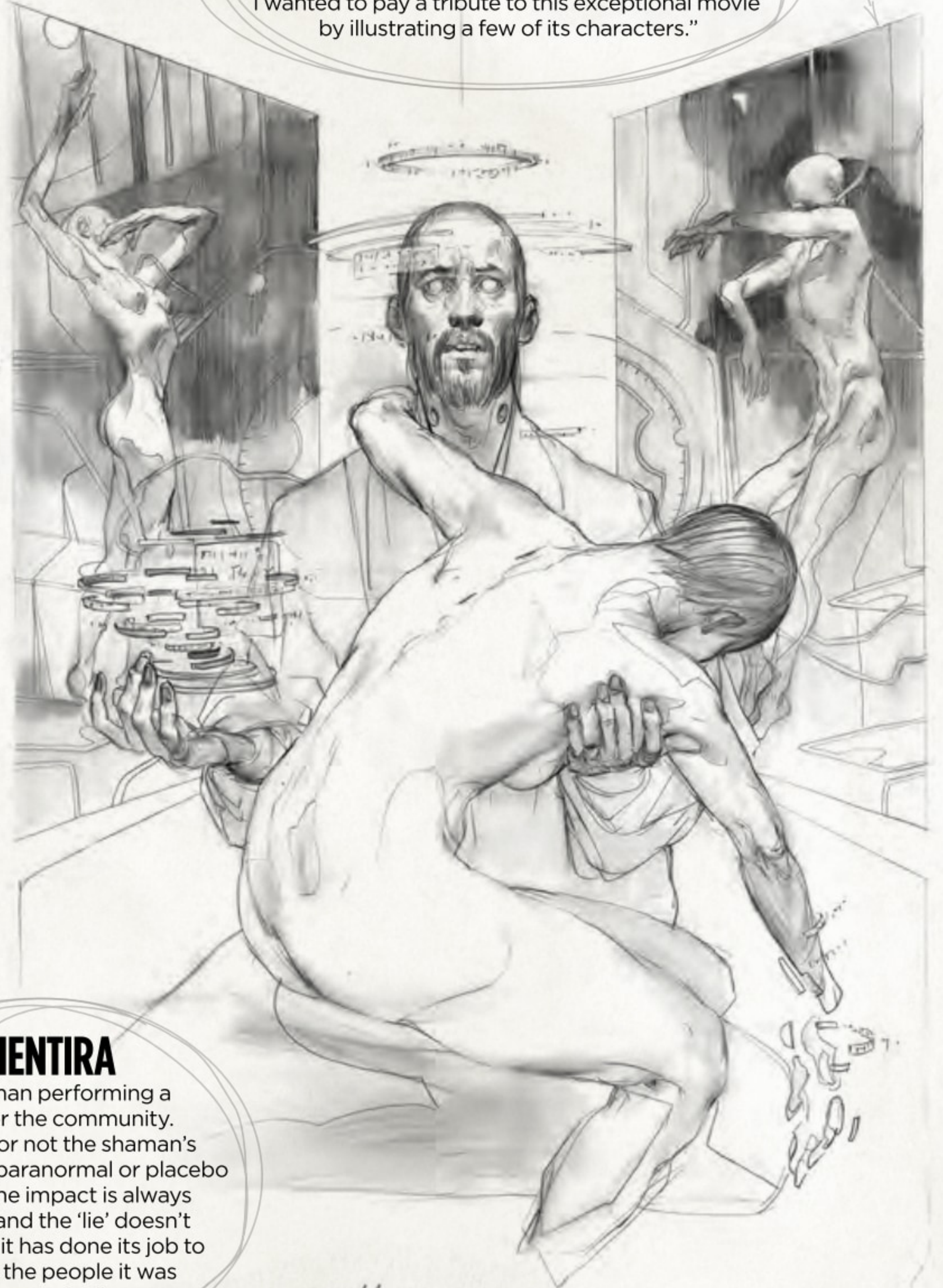
## SHAMAN

"I'm interested in communities that keep ancient practices, like shamanism, alive and part of their culture to this day."



## NEANDER WALLACE

"Blade Runner 2049 is one of my favourite films, both for the characters as well as its visual richness. I wanted to pay a tribute to this exceptional movie by illustrating a few of its characters."

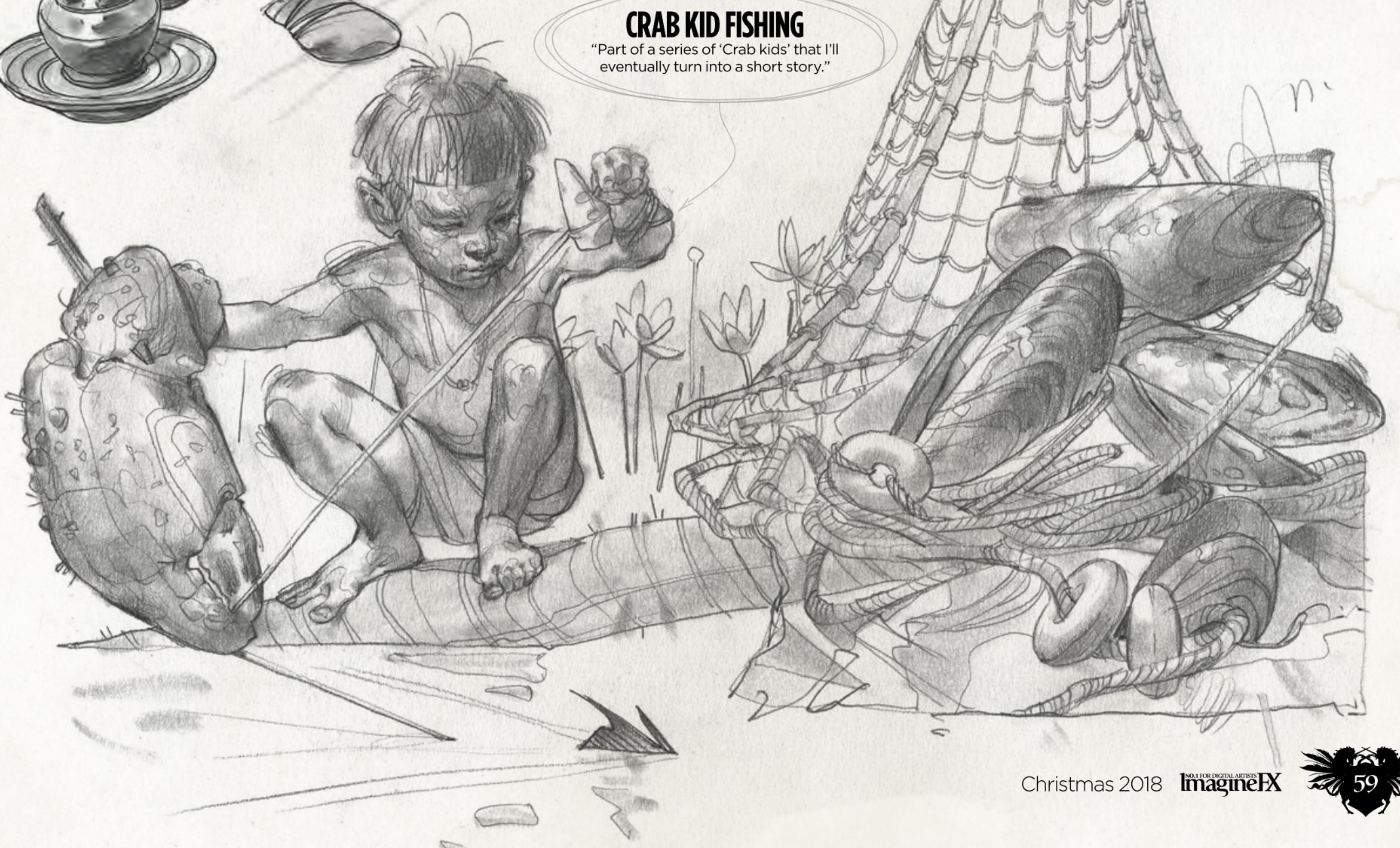


## MENTIRA

"A shaman performing a ritual for the community. Whether or not the shaman's practice has paranormal or placebo effects, the impact is always present, and the 'lie' doesn't matter, for it has done its job to engage the people it was meant for."

## CRAB KID FISHING

"Part of a series of 'Crab kids' that I'll eventually turn into a short story."





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## This issue:

### 62 Design a vibrant and fun character

Mel Milton reveals the many creative choices he has to make, as he designs and paints an original female character.

### 68 Paint with a limited palette

Min Yum demonstrates his method for creating an image using contrast and just four values, touching on optical illusions and storytelling, too.

### 76 Master the art of contrapposto

Patrick J Jones gives his figures a dynamic look through the use of contrapposto, and reveals how to use sanguine pencil on toned paper.

### 84 Paint expressive portrait art

Learn how Phil Galloway uses ArtRage 5 to paint a texture-filled male portrait that's full of colour and character.



## Photoshop

# DESIGN A VIBRANT & FUN CHARACTER

**Mel Milton** reveals the many creative choices he has to make, as he designs and paints an original female character for this month's cover

### Artist PROFILE

**Mel Milton**  
LOCATION: US

The former character animator for video games and figure-drawing instructor is now a full-time pro hobbyist.  
<https://ifxm.ag/melm>



A few months ago I wrote an article in ImagineFX on getting motivated [see page 44 for how to get hold of issue 162]. One of those tips was embrace the dreamer within you.

I remember picking up past issues of ImagineFX, hoping to glean some knowledge that would help me get my foot in the door of this industry.

I continue to celebrate the dreamer that I was and still am, because each art step has been such a gift. It was a goal I was happy to achieve when I was asked to be this month's cover artist. My mind was blown!

I knew this would be more of a challenge than normal. The benefit of this cover project was to be able to see how that factor affected me during the creative process. Mental hurdles

are abundant when I'm working and each one gives me something new to take away into future projects.

I'm eager to dive into this and know that I'm continuing my growth as a creative. This accomplishment means so much to me and I'm grateful to get the opportunity to share with you some of what goes through my mind when creating a digital portrait.



### 1 Blocking out personality elements

I receive notes to design a 20-year-old female who's fun, fresh, vibrant and modern. At the beginning of every piece I take a moment to think about how I'm feeling. I'm happy to be working on this project, but some

jobs aren't this cut and dried. With every project, there's a moment when the inner critic will have me second-guessing myself. By taking my feelings into consideration, I can go easier on myself, even though I'll set my standards much higher for myself than normal, which can create added

disappointment and frustration during the process.

I start with six sketches to get down shapes and simple personality. I want to convey different attitudes so I play with angles and poses. Hats, jackets, glasses and tattoos add a youthful, modern feel. Option E is chosen. ➡

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**RESOURCES**

## WORKSHOP BRUSHES

**PHOTOSHOP**

**CUSTOM BRUSHES: MELS CHALK BRUSH**

This is my go-to brush. I use this large and small to achieve fun textures when I block out shapes and blend colours.

**MELS PENCIL BRUSH**

The good ol' pencil brush. This is my sketcher, but I also use it large to add another level of texture.

**MELS HARD ELLIPTICAL**

I use this one to quickly sketch and lay out flat shapes. It gives a solid foundation for the other two brushes.



**2 Getting the tones down**  
I begin to work in tones. I hadn't thought about the T-shirt design at this point, so I decide to put my logo on it until I come up with something better. Because the character is pushed into a more intimate portrait view for layout reasons, I'm asked to put in a hand, and work up some tattoos on her arm.



**3 Let's get to the colour!**  
Depending on what I'm trying to accomplish, sometimes I go in with colour. Here, I haven't defined some of the design elements so I start with tone. I place Overlay layers above my black and white tone to get the large colours areas laid out. Once the majority of colour is there I combine all my layers and start painting on them.



**4 Which way now?**  
As I go along, I find things in my original sketch that I hadn't stuck with. In the previous iteration, I handled her hair shapes more like clay. I decided to get back to the curlier version I had intended. I'm also struggling with her hand position. It feels stiff – it's lost some of the personality that I had intended.



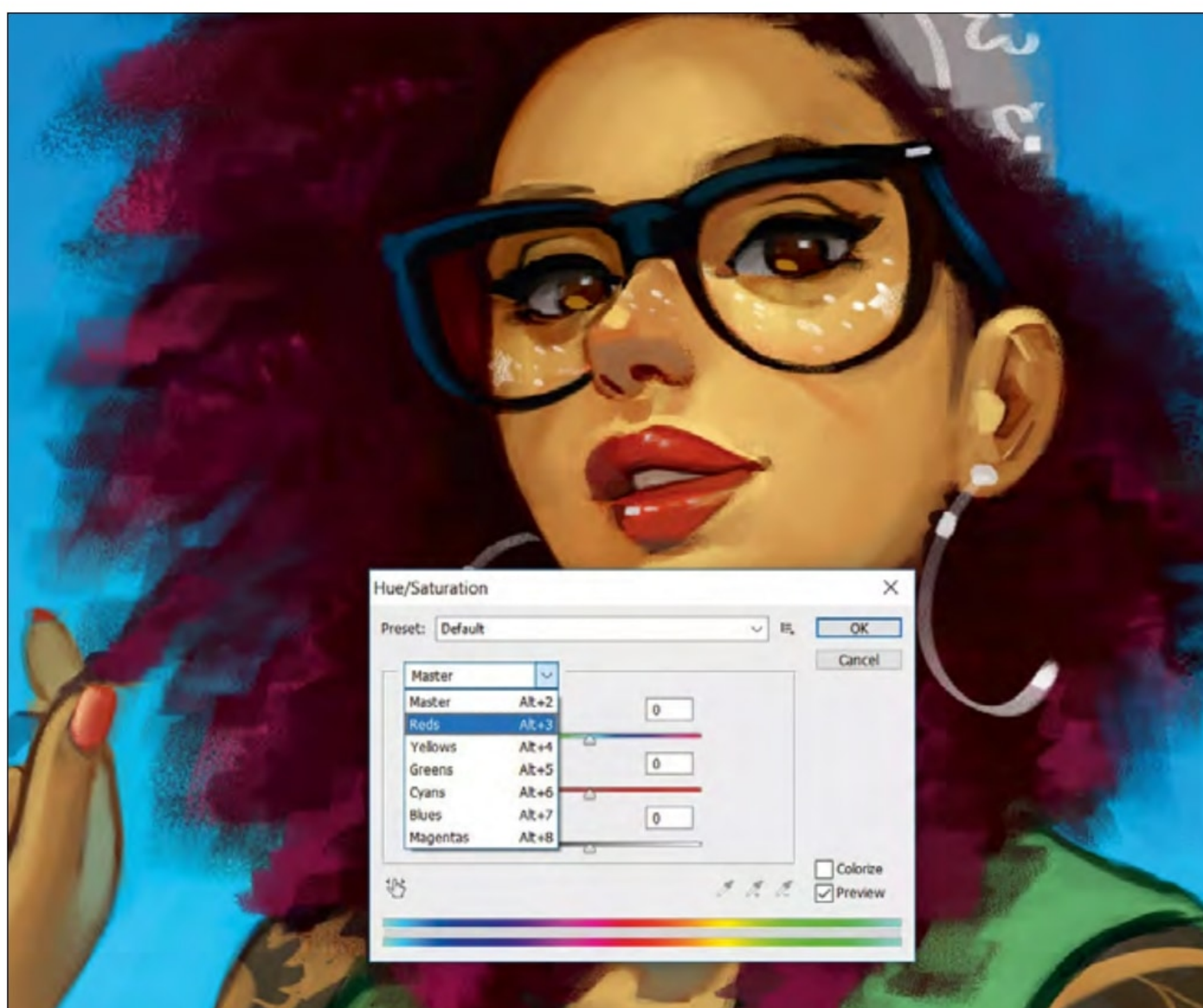
**5 Sometimes things just don't work**  
My wife lets me know that the arm and hand position isn't working. I get rid of it and continue with the colouring. I decide on a blue background because her skin tones are warm; I feel that it balances out the colour. I use her green T-shirt to bridge the warm and cool together. Notes from the ImagineFX team say that the position of the hand isn't working. My wife is clairvoyant.





## 6 Just keep swimming

I look for ways to place the arm in a fun position, which will enable me to add the tattoos in her current framing. I choose to have her playing with her hair, and pose her arm in such a way that I can make the best use of space for tattoos. I also turn her T-shirt into a tank top.



## 7 Working with colour and saturation

I start to play with colour, contrast and saturation to push the warm feeling. I select Image>Adjustments>Hue/Saturation (or press Ctrl+U to open the panel) and drop the Saturation down just a bit on the master level and punch up the red level adjustment slight, to make her skin colours pop a little more.



## 8 But what about the hat?

I haven't thought about a design for the headgear up until this point. However, I know that I want my character to be wearing a baseball cap. I choose pink to maintain the warm tones and decide to apply a simple floral pattern to it, which helps to give it a slightly more feminine feel. I add some white freckle accents for some facial texture and big, loopy earrings to bring something shiny to the composition.







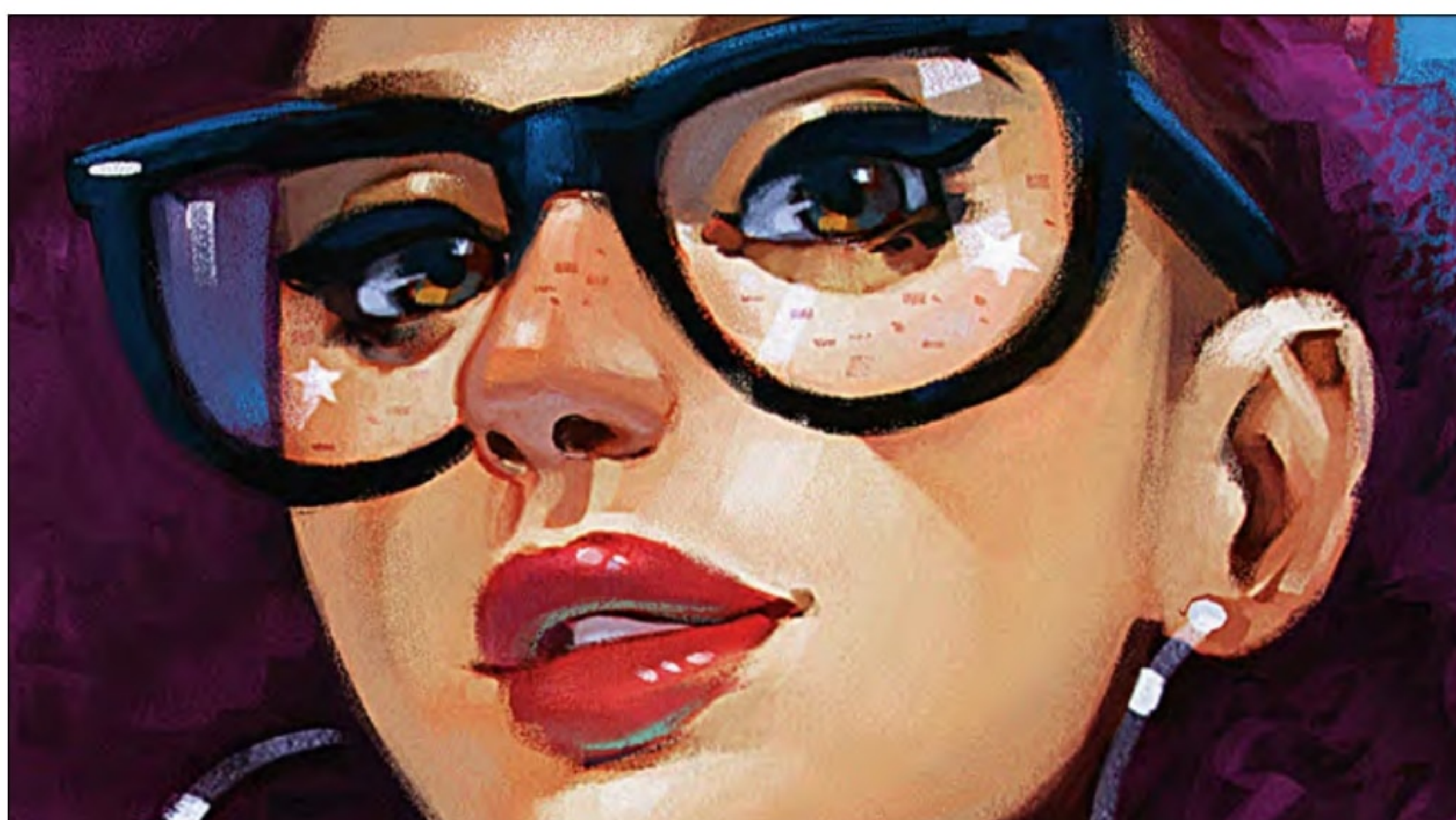
## 9 Use the Liquify tool to correct proportion errors

I use my custom Flip Canvas shortcut (Ctrl+Alt+F) to flip the image horizontally. I've set this shortcut to a hotkey on my Cintiq, but haven't set it up on my Wacom Mobile Studio Pro – don't ask me why! I use the Liquify tool to fix any proportion errors that I spot when I flip the image.



## 10 I've been looking at this for too long

At this point I've frustrated myself, just like I knew I would! My daughter's birthday is a great excuse to unwind before putting some fresh eyes on the piece. She knows I'm excited about this commission and this pause helps to remind me why I wanted to do the job in the first place. The break was much needed: I look at my artwork with different eyes. I receive notes to remove the hand because it'll obscure text on the cover. I bring her tank top sleeves in a bit and continue her tattoos up her shoulder. I also revisit her eyes – something about them is amiss.



## 11 Finishing touches

I work to soften the edges to give some depth to the piece, and use large brush strokes around the hair to add some stylised texture to it. I carry out a few more adjustments with the Liquify tool and change her white freckles to normal ones – white feels a little too distracting. I also use the Color Balance tool to create an overall cooler tone.

I knew I'd beat myself up during this project, but in the end it was well worth

it. Challenges are supposed to do that. I took a longer route than normal to get to the end. I didn't spend as much time in the planning phase as I would have normally, because of my keenness to dive right in. More time spent planning will keep the frustration at bay. Once I settled down I was able to get to where I wanted to with this artwork.

I'm beyond grateful for this opportunity and hope you found this article helpful. Keep on keepin' on! ●





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ImagineFX



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## Procreate & Photoshop

# PAINT WITH A LIMITED PALETTE

**Min Yum** demonstrates his method for creating an image using contrast and just four values, touching on optical illusions and storytelling, too

### Artist PROFILE

**Min Yum**

LOCATION: South Korea

Min is a freelance concept artist and illustrator. He also teaches at Artbrew, based in Seoul.  
<https://ifxm.ag/min-y>



I first read about contrast and values years ago in Andrew Loomis' classic book *Creative Illustration*.

Inside were four odd-looking boxes of various values, which the author claimed to be important when creating a strong illustration.

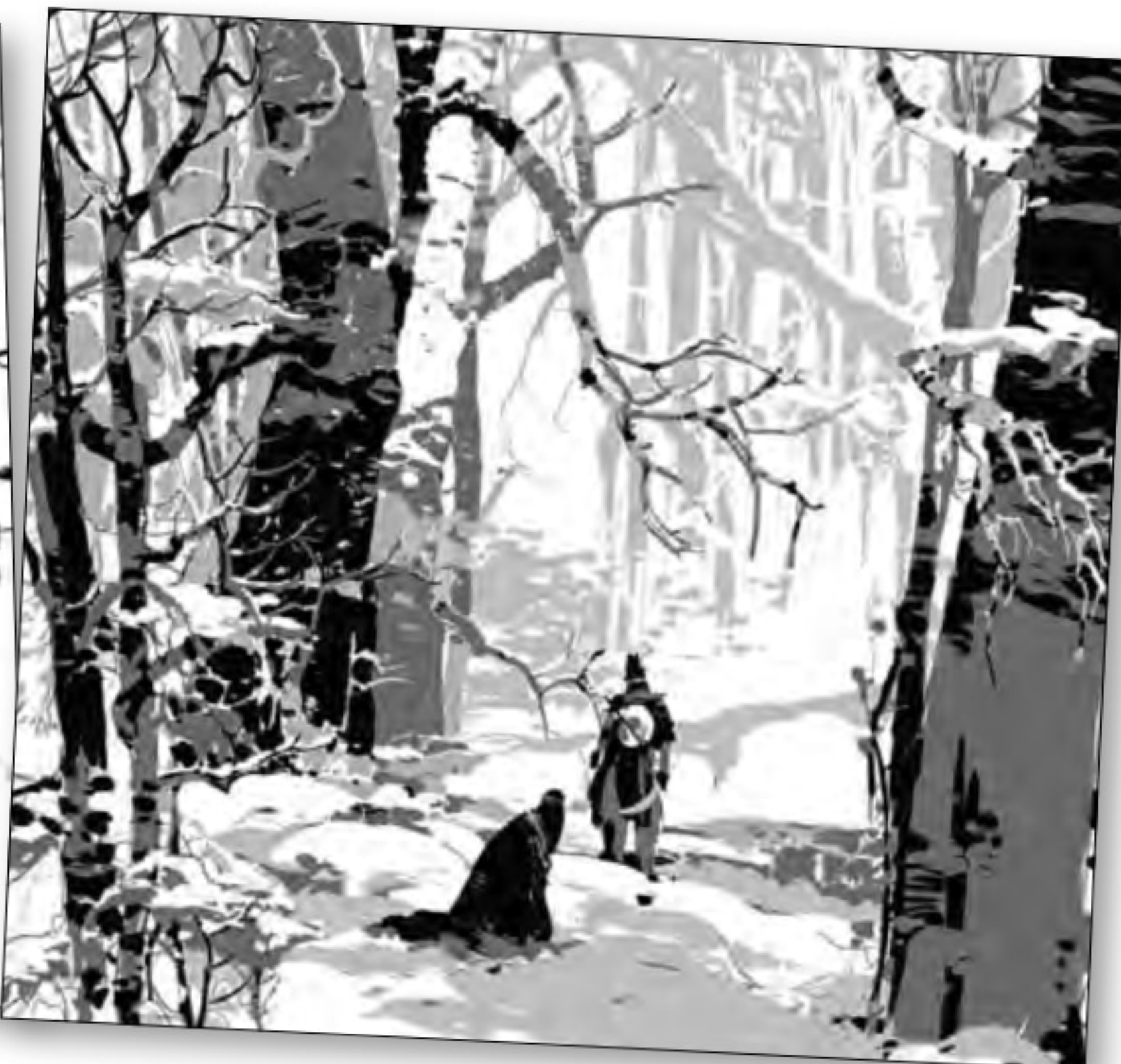
My definition of values has changed since then. I mostly associate them with describing a form, but they

also serve another key role, and that's to govern contrast. Here, contrast refers to how an object stands apart from another. It's how we distinguish an object from its background.

Why this is important? It's basically how we look at things, or how certain objects become noticeable when they have a strong contrast. And by incorporating them into our work we can visually control how objects are read – or not read – by their roles in

an image. If they're important then you should add contrast, which makes them stand out. Objects of lesser importance need to retain their low contrast, so a viewer knows it's there but won't be distracted from the focal point of the image.

So unlike using them to describe form, this approach emphasises the relationship of contrasts between values. If done correctly it'll result in a strong image with clear readability.



### 1 Why use four values?

There are many variations on painting with contrast. Many artists use three values, which results in a bold painting. Others use five because the final art is slightly more forgiving. Yet it's not important how many values you use – the key thing to understand is that you have to use values to create contrast for better readability, rather than describe a form or lighting setup. This will free up a lot of values and give you an opportunity to think about the effect of controlling contrast. This also helps you to prioritise focal points over less-important details. These two images show how the focal point is emphasised through the use of limited values.

### 2 Get sketching to test my ideas

I always start with sketches, and Procreate's sketch brushes are ideal for this stage. The drawing helps me to see where I'm going. It's a quick way to confirm if an idea will work or if I need to take another approach. It's much easier to make adjustments and explore visual ideas now, rather than during the later stages of a painting, where it's time-consuming to make even the smallest of changes. ➡



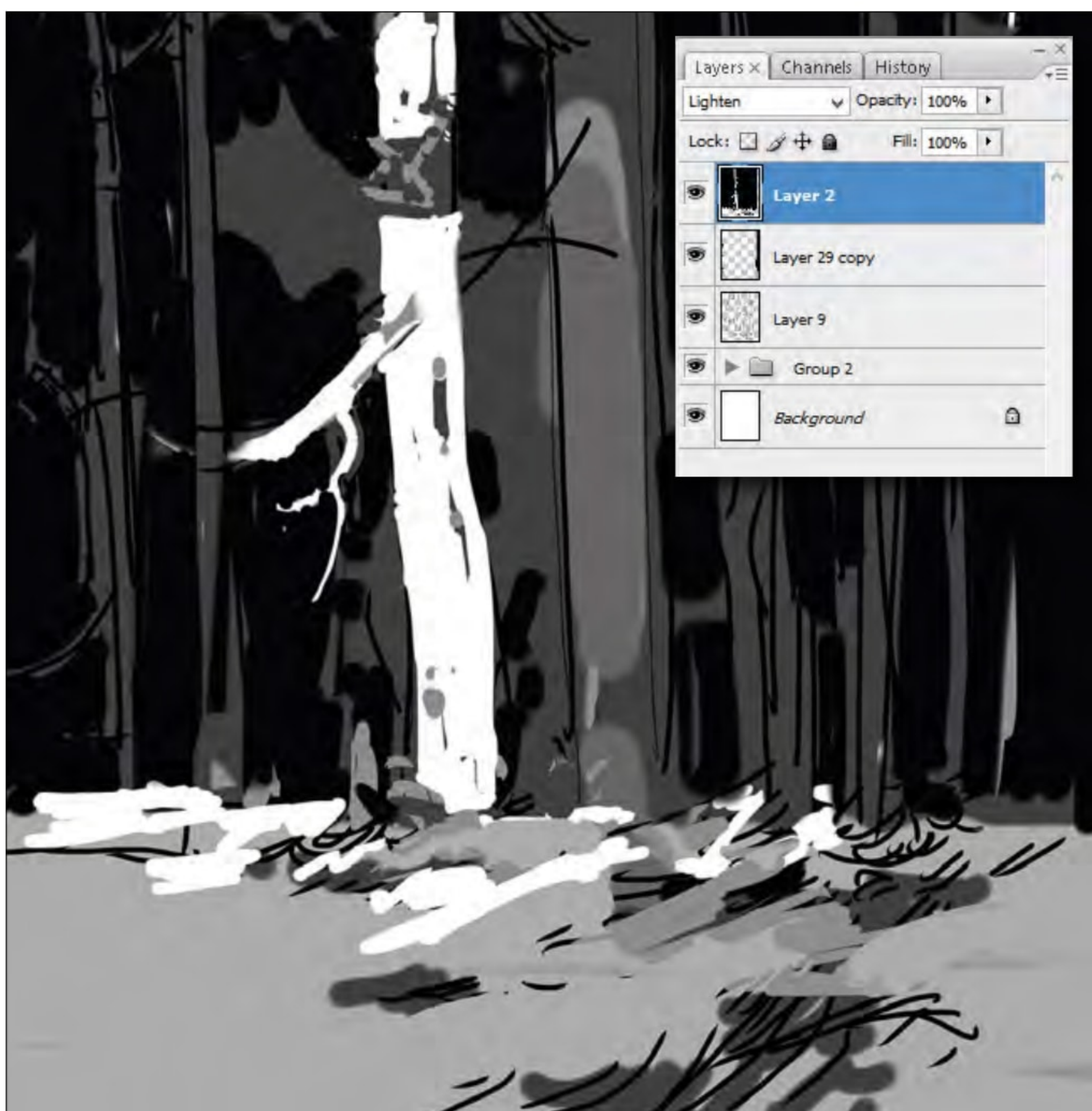
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# In depth Limited palette







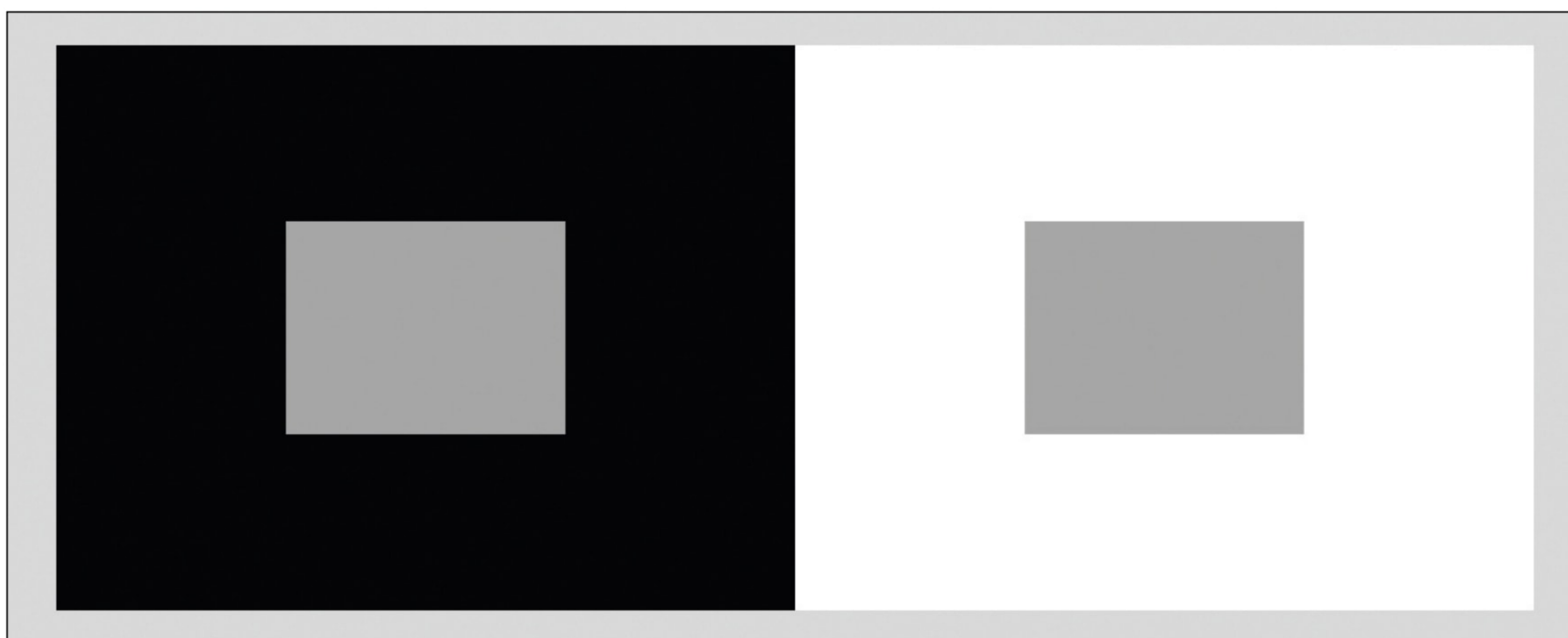
### 3 Simple value planning

I now switch to Photoshop. It's always best to work from big to small as you paint. My plan is to show the large, key shapes without details and see if they can be read. My biggest concern is that since my darkest value (black) is tied to the background, I'm left with three values to describe the rest of the scene. It's going to be a challenge, but at least this gives me an idea of the problems that lie ahead.



### 4 Composition options

Because we're actively thinking about how this image reads, this should result in a good composition. Large contrasts in values needs to be placed next to the focal point, to ensure that I grab the viewer's attention. Subtler adjacent values such as dark grey and black could be used in details that may not be important, but need to be present to support the main idea: in this case a small group of trees within a forest. I want to show strong, vertical trees with a hint of a large silhouette within the treeline. It's going to be a little flat, but there's a good opportunity to explore rhythmic shapes and patterns.



### 5 Create an optical illusion through the use of simultaneous contrast

Although four values are never really going to be enough to describe much, they'll behave differently depending on their surroundings. For example, a light grey on a white background will appear darker than the same grey on a black background. This is a well-known optical illusion called simultaneous contrast, and I know that if I use it correctly I can describe a lot more values by tricking viewers into thinking they're seeing more than just the four I'm using. An example of how I'll use simultaneous contrast to show more values is in the tree details. The darker trunk has light grey patterns and the same light grey patterns are present in the white bark, but will appear slightly different from each other.



## 6 Working with silhouettes

When it comes to the details, it's really all about describing silhouettes. Here's a close-up of a tree and a branch sticking out. They're both in light greys, but if I were to keep the start of the branch in the same light grey then I'd eventually lose its silhouette. I could reinforce it with a hint of black as a shadow, but I need it to read better and it requires more details, too. I add white to the branch until it's not set against the end of the grey trunk. Then I finish the rest of the branch in grey.



**RESOURCES**

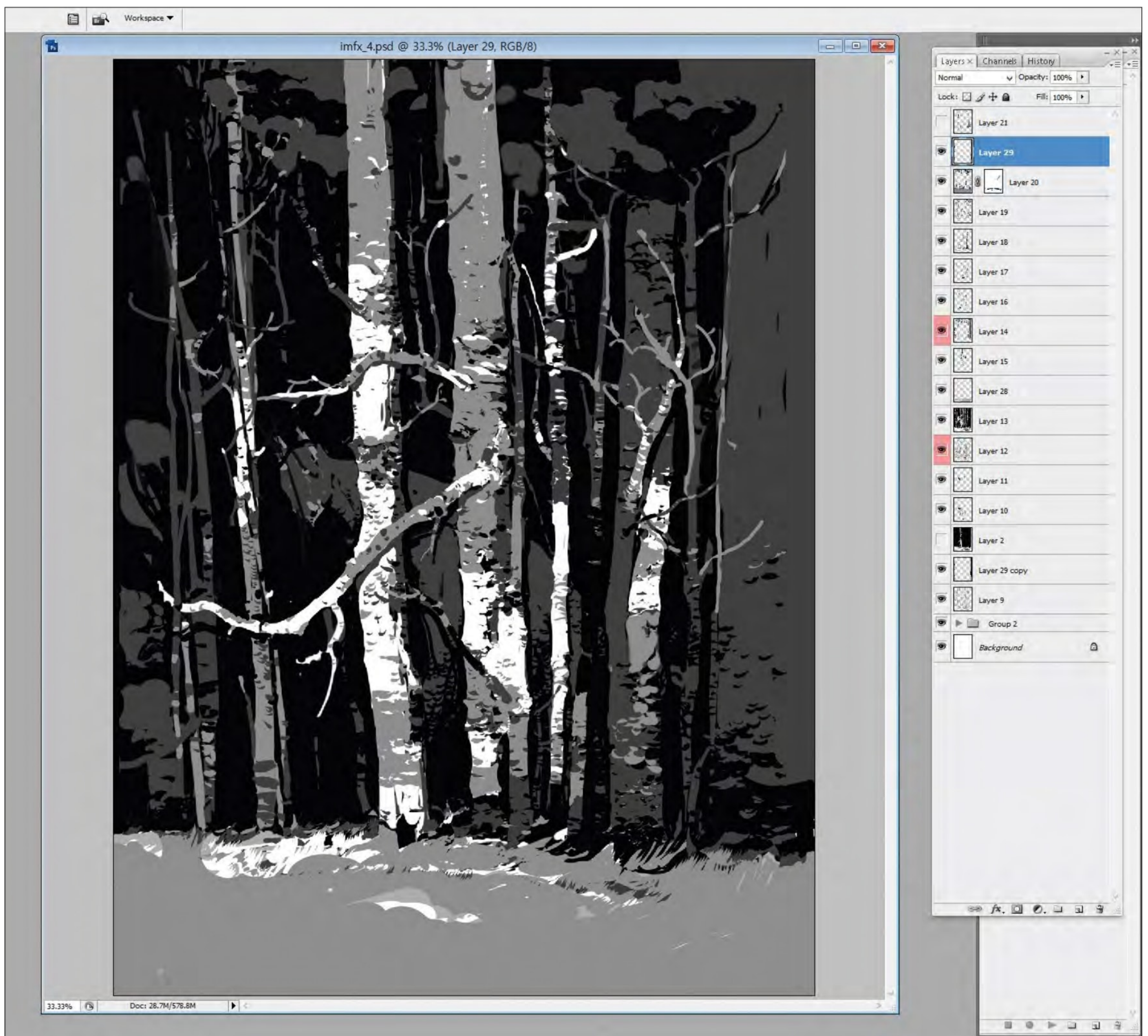
### WORKSHOP BRUSHES

PHOTOSHOP

**CUSTOM BRUSH: FLAT\_ROUND**



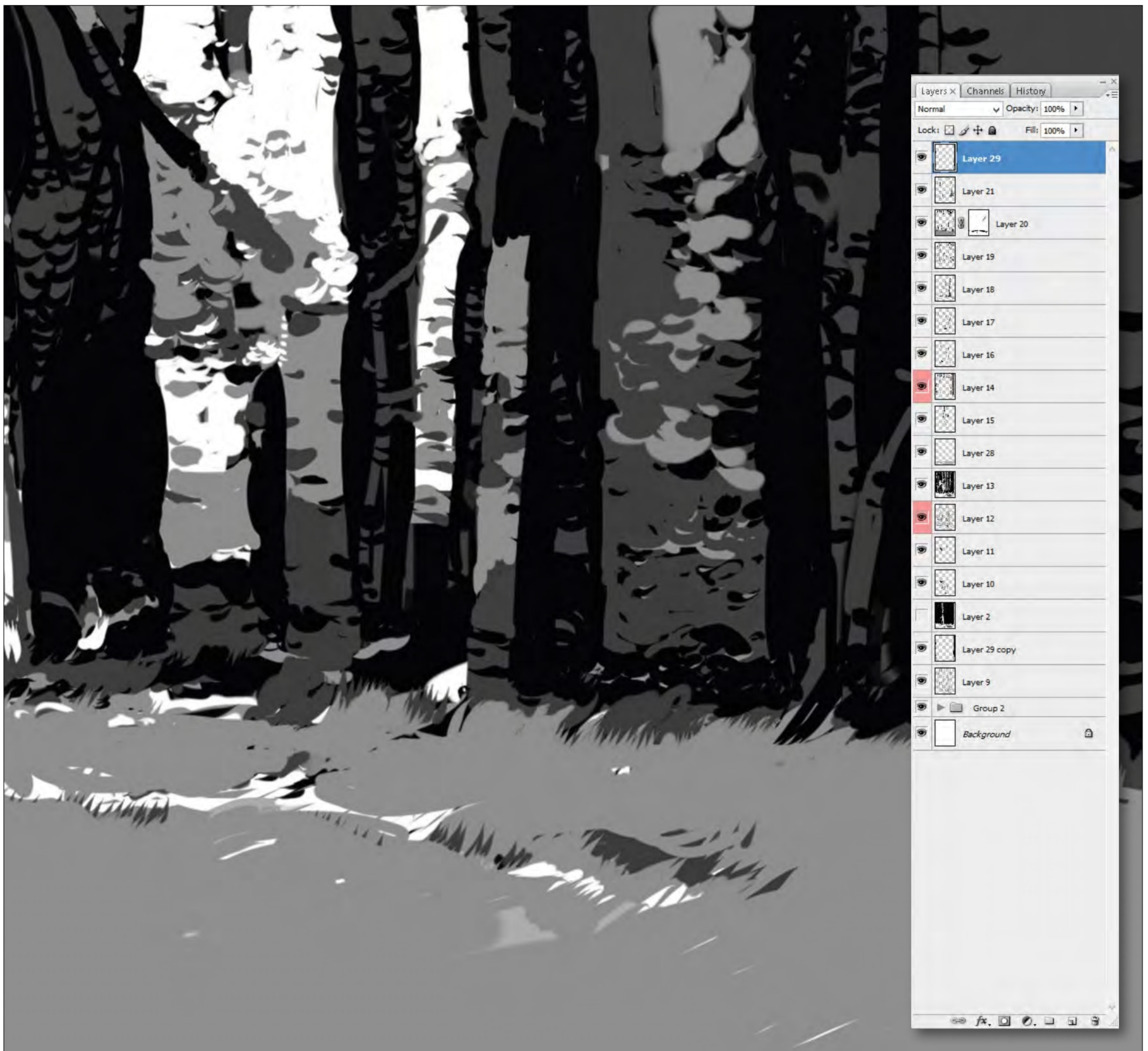
Without a flat solid brush such as this one, your limited values can mix and you'll end up with a lot more than just four.



## 7 Developing patterns for details

With limited values to show form and depth, I need to find other means to create visual interest. I add some patterns to suggest textures, which also helps viewers identify cropped branches or trunks. This makes the silhouettes of branches in different values look more natural. ➡





## 8 Describing form

I need to think how I can describe form in this arboreal scene. Without form the treescape would be too flat and devoid of space. Here I use black to show the shadow region, but the trick is to place a darker grey tree next to it, so the black shadows don't dissolve into the background.

## 9 Adding background details

The outer areas of the paintings don't require much attention, so very little contrast is used. I feel the treeline needs more foliage to be read as a forest at the moment. Unfortunately, I've allocated black as the background default colour. I introduce foliage in a darker grey in the background so they can free up the black to work as branches and trees.

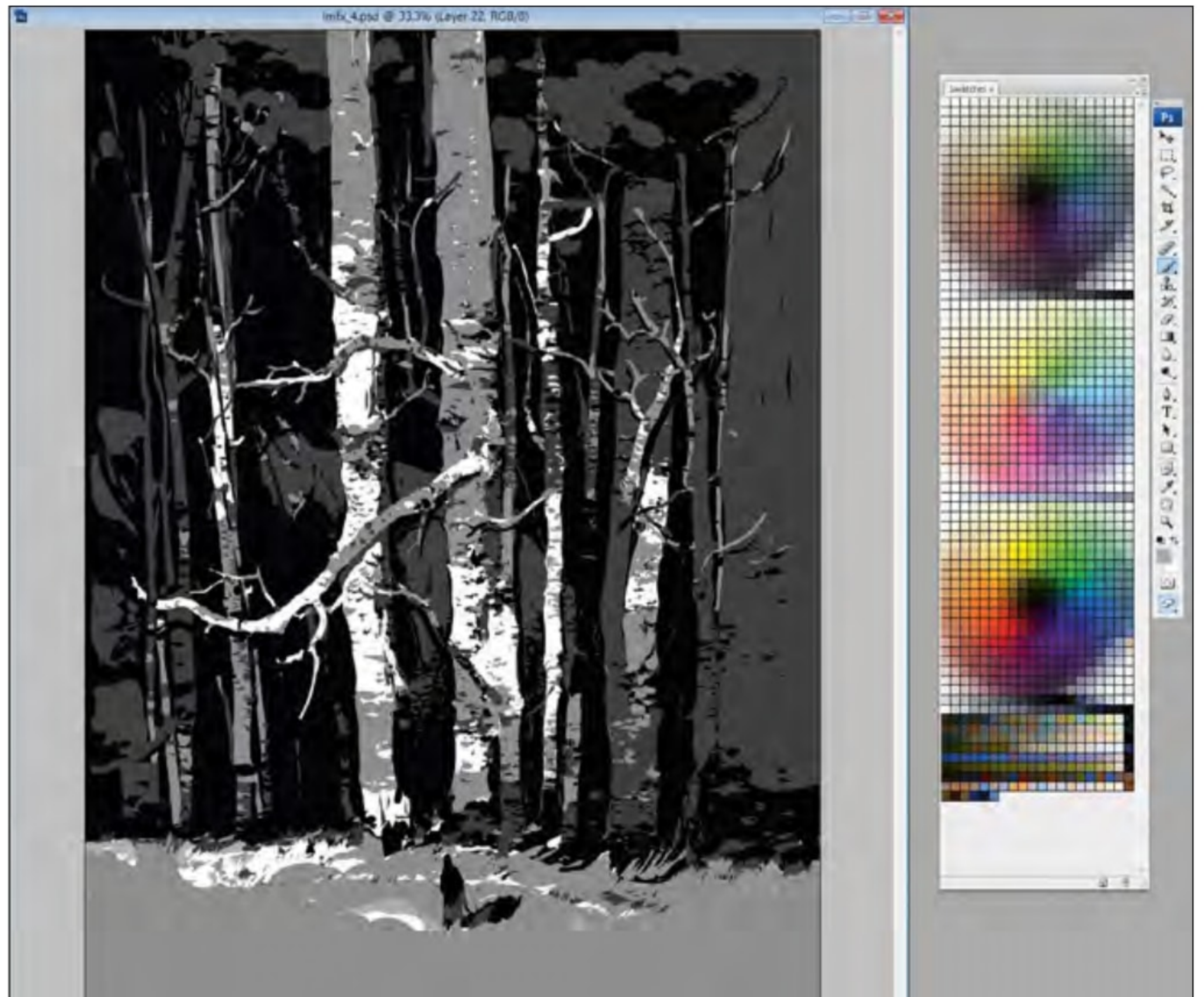






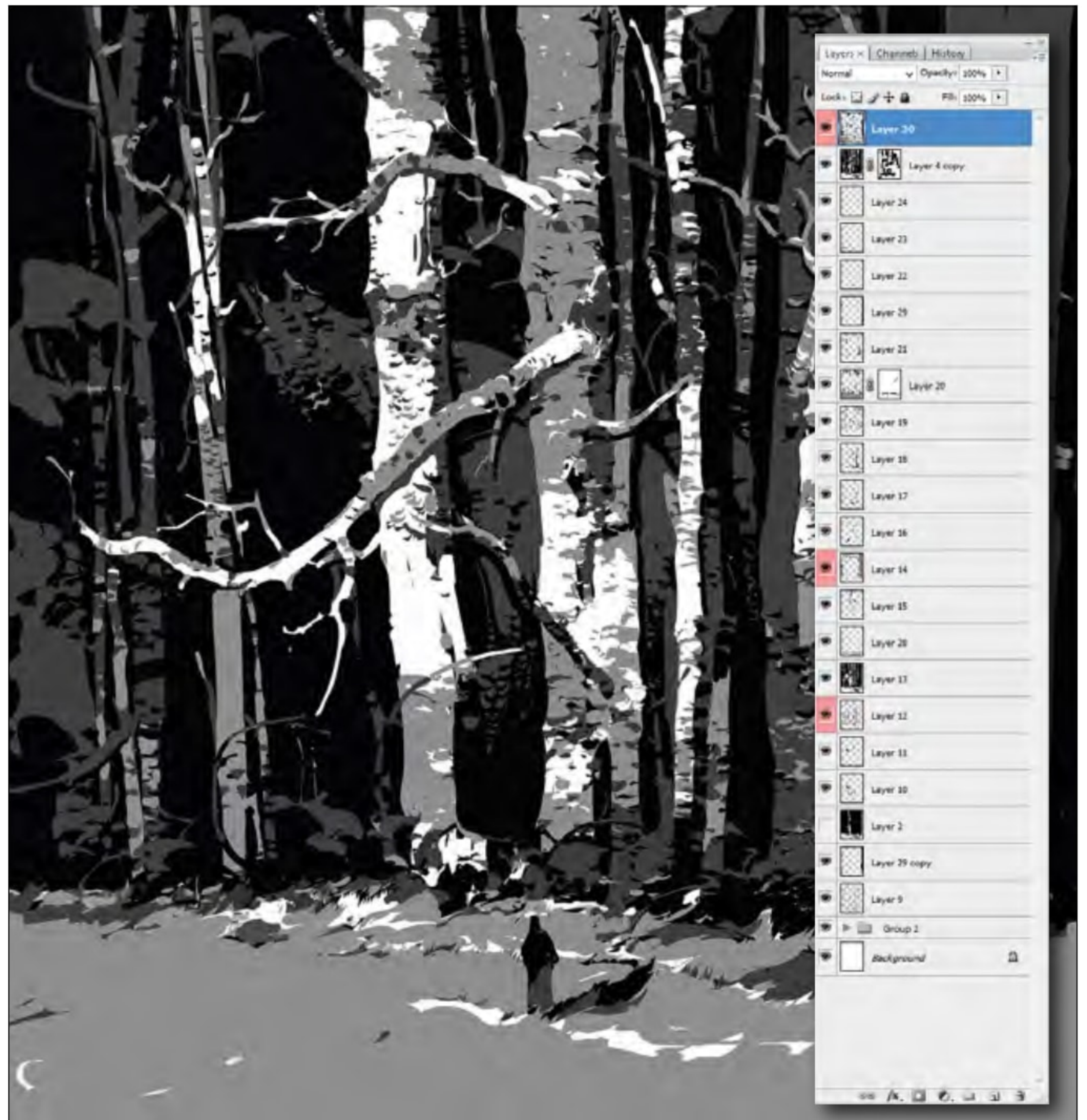
## 10 Suggesting scale and story

A human figure will help immensely when indicating the size of the trees. A viewer will instantly understand the scale of important objects, relative to the figure. It also helps me to tell a story. Originally, I had a more lighter ground, but it was creating too much contrast so added more neutral grey to knock it back a bit.



## 11 Final touches

I still want this image to tell a story even with all the technical limitations. So this is where I focus more on the overall look, making sure that I've kept the initial feel of the painting and forest is looking natural. I also adjust my details: sometimes it's more important to sacrifice details for the sake of a better image overall.



## 12 Wrapping things up

Using limited values has helped me notice many fundamentals in paintings that I might have otherwise overlooked, such as strong composition, better readability, prioritised details and more options for effectively describing objects. The number of values isn't that important; it's more about getting to know their role when working with contrast, and how this knowledge can eventually be carried into colour work and tackling more complex paintings.



Next month

Inside the  
art studio of  
CD Projekt Red  
as it gears up for  
Cyberpunk 2077's  
big release!



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Next month

Next month in...  
NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS  
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# Video game art techniques

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The lead concept artist for Halo talks about Master Chief and more.

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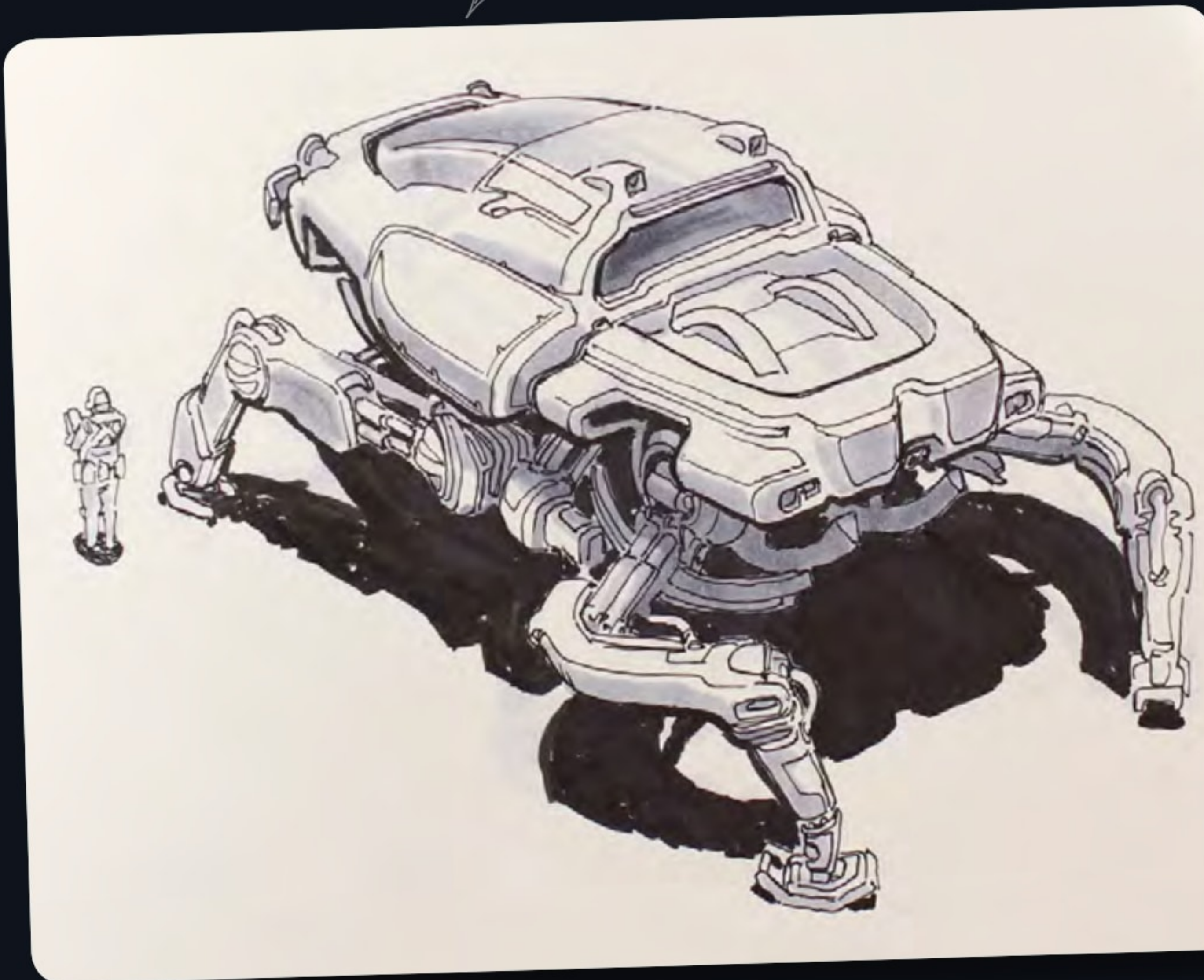
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## **Figure drawing masterclass**

Patrick J Jones continues his series on how to draw figure and form.



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## Figure drawing: part 2

# MASTER THE ART OF CONTRAPPOSTO

**Patrick J Jones** gives his figures a dynamic look through the use of contrapposto, and reveals how to use sanguine pencil on toned paper

### Artist PROFILE

**Patrick J Jones**  
LOCATION: Australia

Patrick is a figurative artist author and teacher. His art technique books, *The Anatomy of Style* and *The Sci-fi & Fantasy Techniques of Patrick J. Jones* were both award-winning best sellers. His next book on drawing the figure, *Figures from Life*, is now on sale. [www.pjartworks.com](http://www.pjartworks.com)

### GET YOUR RESOURCES

See page 8 now!



Welcome to part two of my eight-part workshops on drawing the figure. This month we'll draw a male

figure in contrapposto. This Italian term means counterpoise, or counterbalance, and refers to a figure balancing more weight on one side, usually the straight-leg side of the body, in a standing pose.

The most famous contrapposto artwork is probably Michelangelo's statue of David sculpted between 1501 and 1504. Incredibly, Michelangelo was a mere 26 years old when he started chipping into that massive 17-foot block of marble!

The earliest example of contrapposto can be traced back to the Kritios Boy sculpted around 480BC. Before Kritios, figures were usually symmetrical or flat graphics such as the hieroglyphics found in ancient Egyptian temples. I guess it took a long time for a relaxed pose to be taken seriously.

### A STATE OF FLUX

What is it that makes counterbalanced figures in art so appealing? For me it's the fluid asymmetry. When we're counterbalanced we're in a state of flux. I've looked up at counterbalanced Greek statues and understood how early people believed they saw them move, or even speak, in those ancient temples.

To fill in for David I'll employ my most reliable male model. He's always on time and I pay him with simple foods such as cheese. A great deal for both of us.

Because contrapposto means counterbalance we don't need to always draw the same classic pose. In my oil painting, *The Forge of the*



In *Forge of the Gods*, the contrapposto stance informs the viewer of how much effort Hephaestus is putting into wielding his hammer.

*Gods* (shown above) the Greek god, Hephaestus is counterbalanced, yet there's no straight leg.

One way to find the weight-bearing leg when both legs are bent is to look for the foot that's flat on the ground. I've measured myself in heads and come in at around seven and a quarter heads high, which is an average proportional person. An ideal division is eight heads, which is

what David appears to be. I expected less because he has a large head, but he has a long femur. I have a small head and so I thought I might be eight heads too, but I have a shorter femur. Clearly, everyone is slightly different. Although we can vary greatly in height, most of us are close in basic proportion.

Okay, let's explore this classic compositional technique further. ➡

### WORKSHOP MATERIALS

#### PENCIL

Conté of Paris sepia #617, Pitt White pastel pencil

#### ERASERS

Kneadable eraser, mono eraser, grip eraser, pencil eraser electric eraser

#### MISCELLANEOUS

Paper stumps, tissue, washed and dried shammy leather cloth, toned pastel paper



# In depth Figure drawing: part 2

## MISSED PART ONE?

Turn to **page 44** to pick up last month's instalment, in which Patrick showed how to get more from reference shots.







## 1 Always on time

When starting out as artists most of us can't afford to hire a professional model. However, there's one model always available for free, and that's ourselves. Look closely at my hand here, and you'll see that I'm holding a timer button to take the shot. Place a full-length mirror next to your camera and you're ready to pose.



## 2 Begin the sanguine

For this drawing I'm using sanguine pastel pencil on toned paper. Sanguine means blood and sanguine pencils can range between dark brown to almost pink. I've chose a dark sanguine and a flesh-coloured paper. As usual, I start with basic shapes. I then identify the weight-bearing straight leg and tilt the shoulder toward it for more balance.





### 3 A sense of natural rhythm

I draw smaller shapes inside the big simple shapes. Notice how I treat the rhythm of the legs; I'm drawing from one side to the other. Study how the knees have a low, overlapping curve on the inside and how the calves are high on the outside. This is the natural rhythm of the body, and cannot be ignored by the figure artist.



### 4 It's the tooth that's key

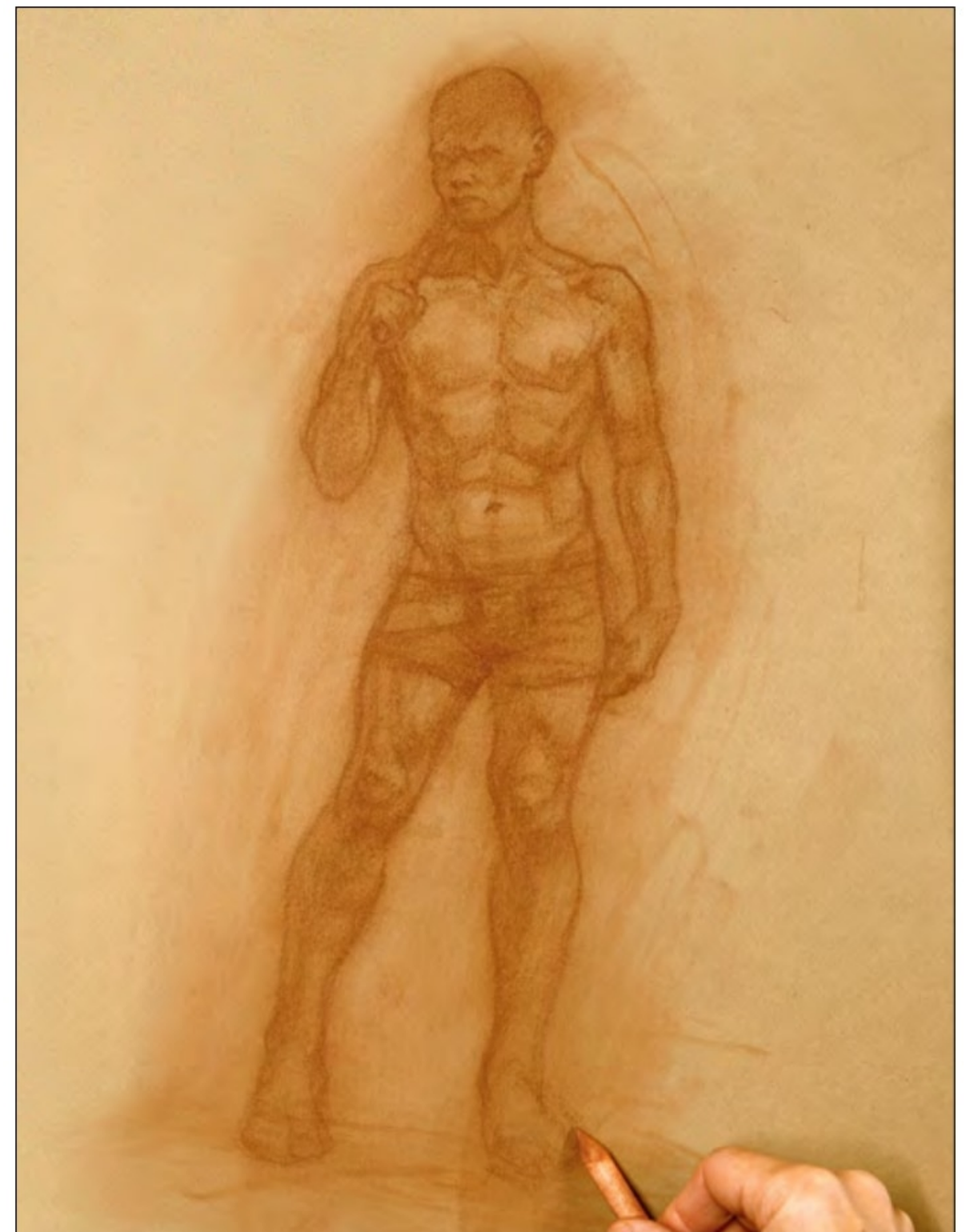
I'm using a high-grade pastel art paper, which can be bought in large individual sheets. Pastel paper has a smooth and a rough side. I choose the smooth side, but it still has a 'tooth', meaning that it has micro pits which hold the pastel pigment. I blend with tissue to smooth out the grain and then ghost the image back. ➡➡





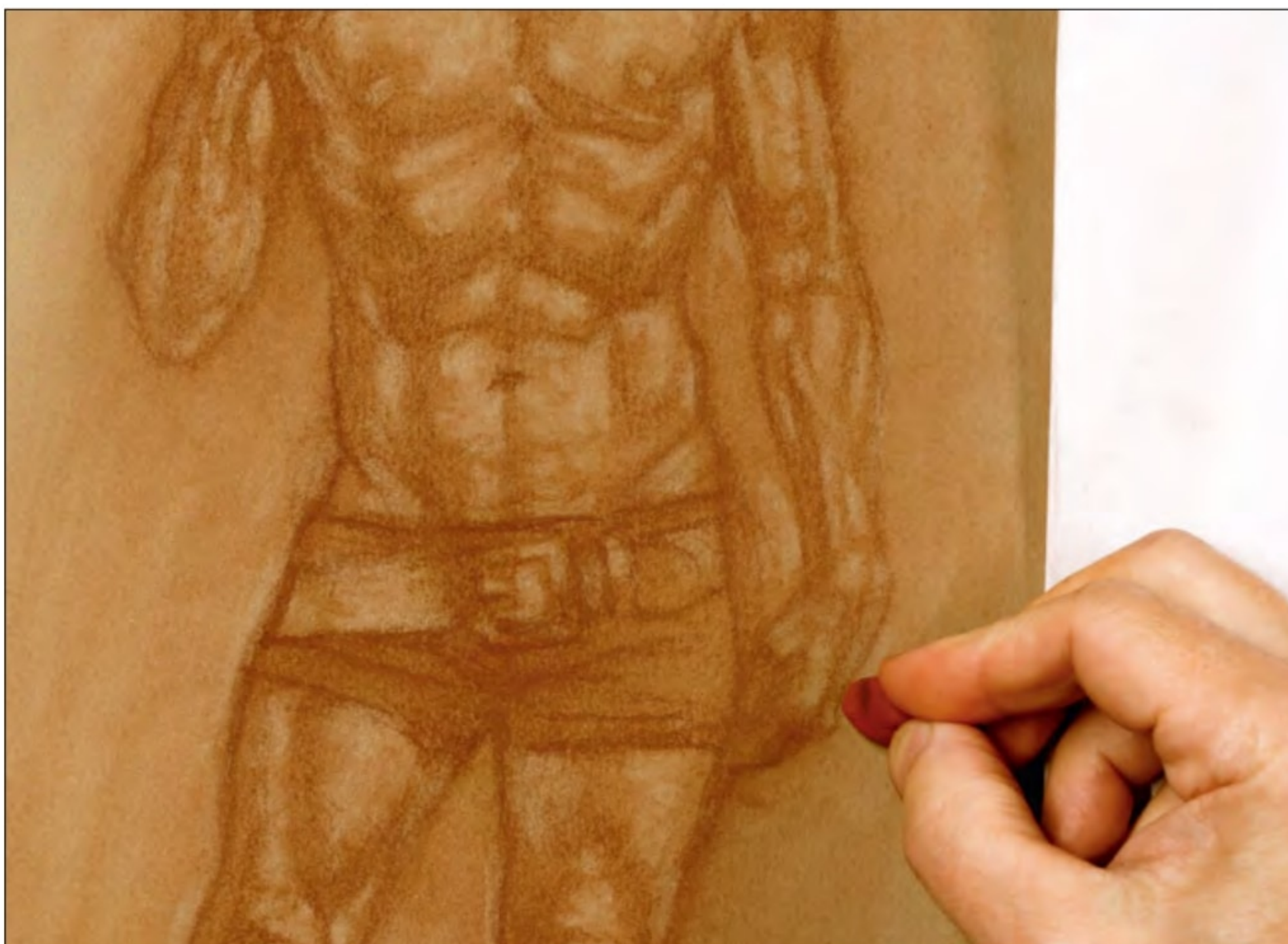
## 5 Introducing Mr Big Head

I stand back from the art and see with a fresh eye that the head needs to be bigger. Best to err on the side of a smaller head to start with, rather than a big head, which can look comical. If the head looks small you can try adding to the skull rather than draw all the features bigger. Usually this works fine. Once I'm happy with the new head size and basic proportions, I start to detail the anatomy.



## 6 Don't be stumped

I blend the edges with a paper stump, improving as I go by reshaping and pushing the pigment around. Be careful not to mindlessly render as it will make the drawing worse. Always be thinking as you render: your drawing will reflect your inner feelings and energy in every mark. I recommend keeping two sets of paper stumps and kneadable erasers so as not to dirty your drawings – one set for sanguine and one set for charcoal.



## 7 Sticking to a simple plan – for now

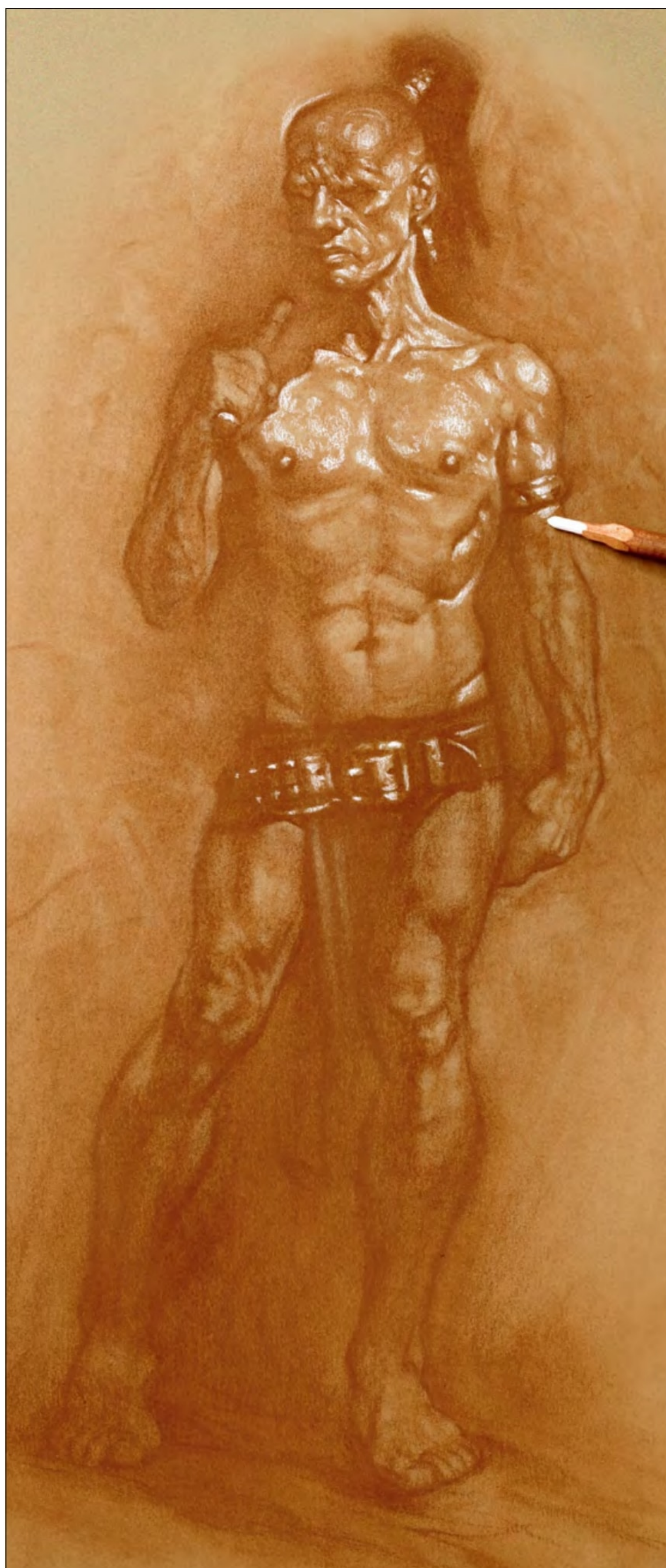
As with the blending stump, I use the eraser with the same mindset and think of it as a drawing tool. Kneadable erasers are pliable, and can be moulded and shaped to pull out highlights. Note how the knees are changing from simple shapes into something more sophisticated. Going from simple to complex is the best approach.



## 8 Maintain flawless skin

As I soften edges with tissue I keep a piece of paper under my hand. This prevents oil transferring to the paper. Natural oil from our hands can be invisible initially, but then appear as blots when we blend later. This is not a big deal on a textured background, but it could spoil the flawless skin tone that you had hoped for.





### 9 Bringing in the highlights

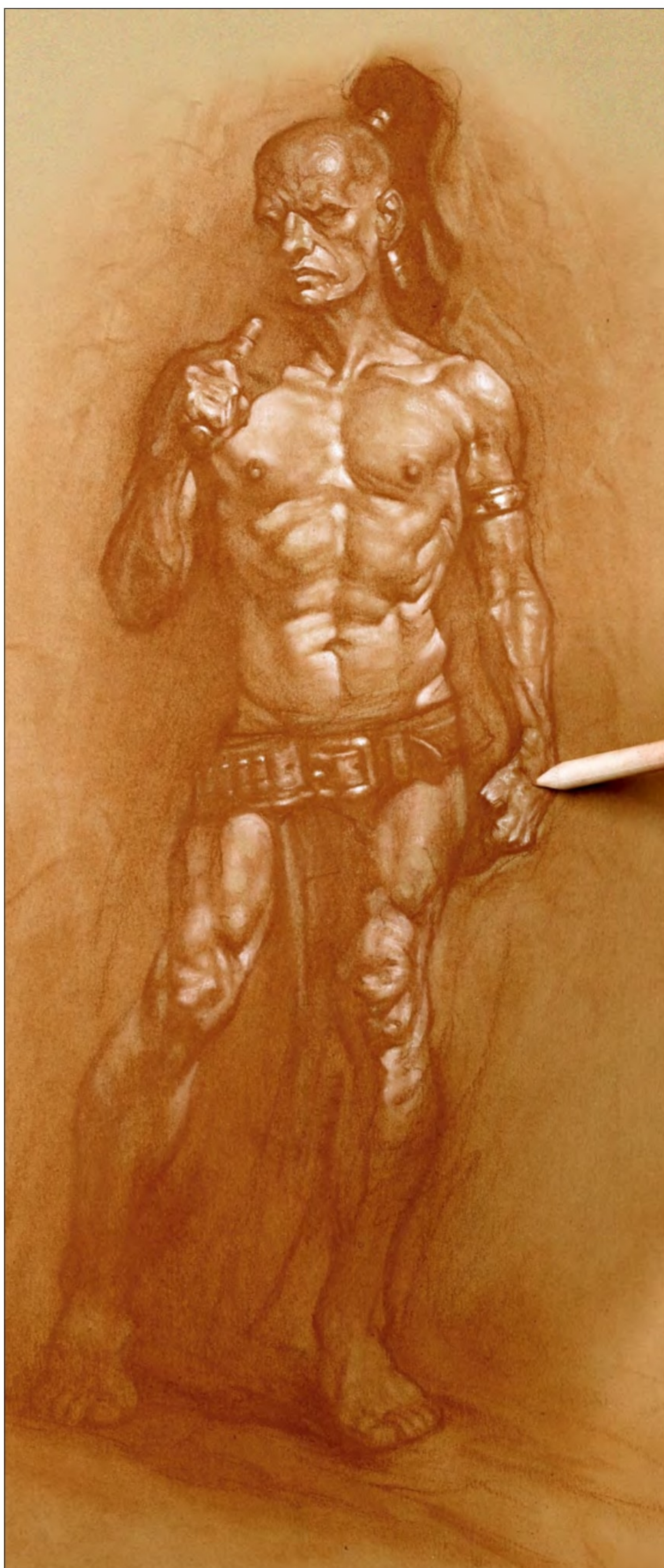
It's been a long time coming but here it is: the white pastel pencil for the highlights. It's important to make sure that the art is already strong, because the white effect shouldn't be used as a crutch. It's also crucial not to mix the sanguine with the white, because the midtone paper represents the midtone flesh of the figure.



### 10 Blend and push

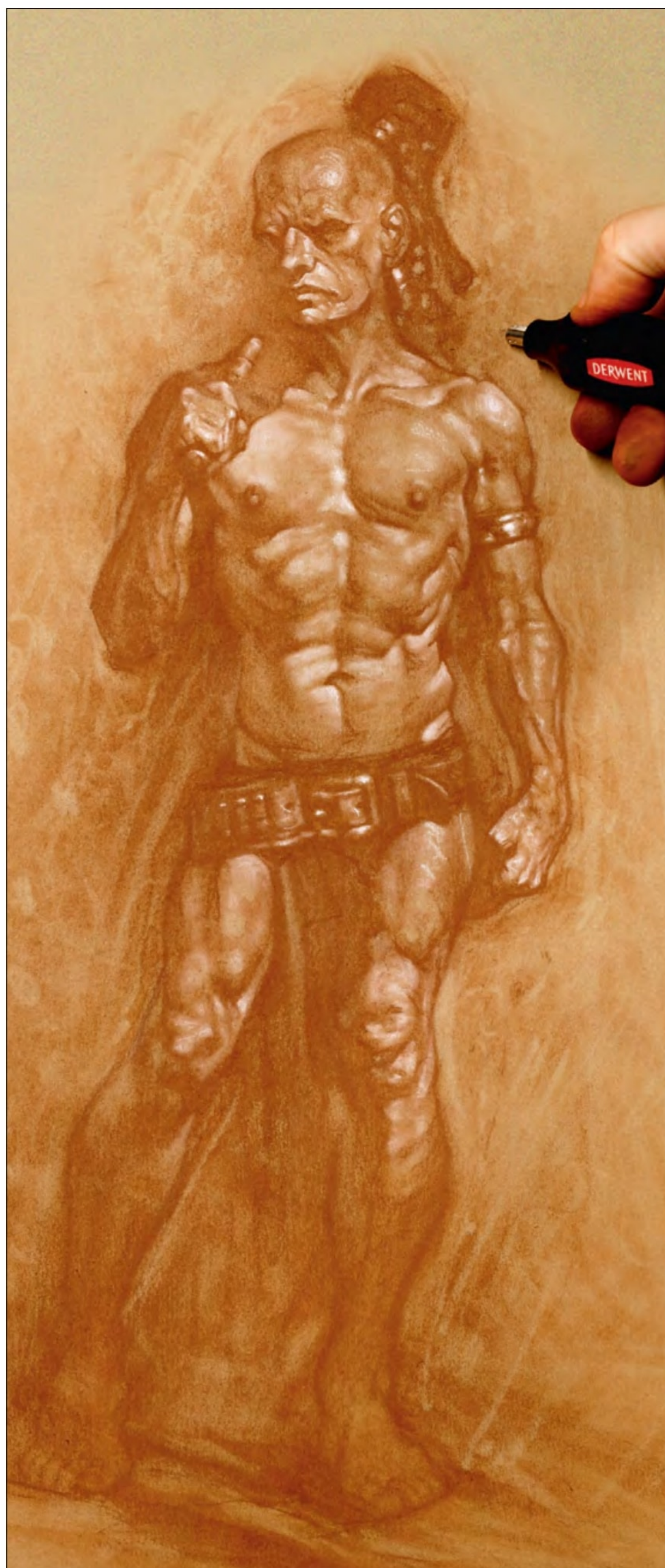
Using all my tools I blend and push the white pigment into the surface. Note how fleshy everything has become based on three simple values: the darks of the sanguine; the midtown of the paper; and the highlights of the white. My pencil eraser with the brush end comes in handy for brushing away eraser debris. ➡➡





## 11 Tackling the anatomical details

Time to address the small stuff and explore the beauty of anatomy and form. Constant study of the knees is important because everyone's knees are different due to variable 'bursa' shapes. These are little fatty pads that protect the joints. Note that I'm using a clean paper stump for blending whites.



## 12 Have a strong theme

After I tone down the whites I title the piece *The Tracker*, based on the stories of indigenous warriors who were employed to track down their own people. This happened the world over as colonial might took control. Betrayal is a strong theme in my art due to the desperation and heartache that it evokes.





**NEXT MONTH!**  
Part 3: Patrick shows how gravity and compression affect the pose of a female figure.

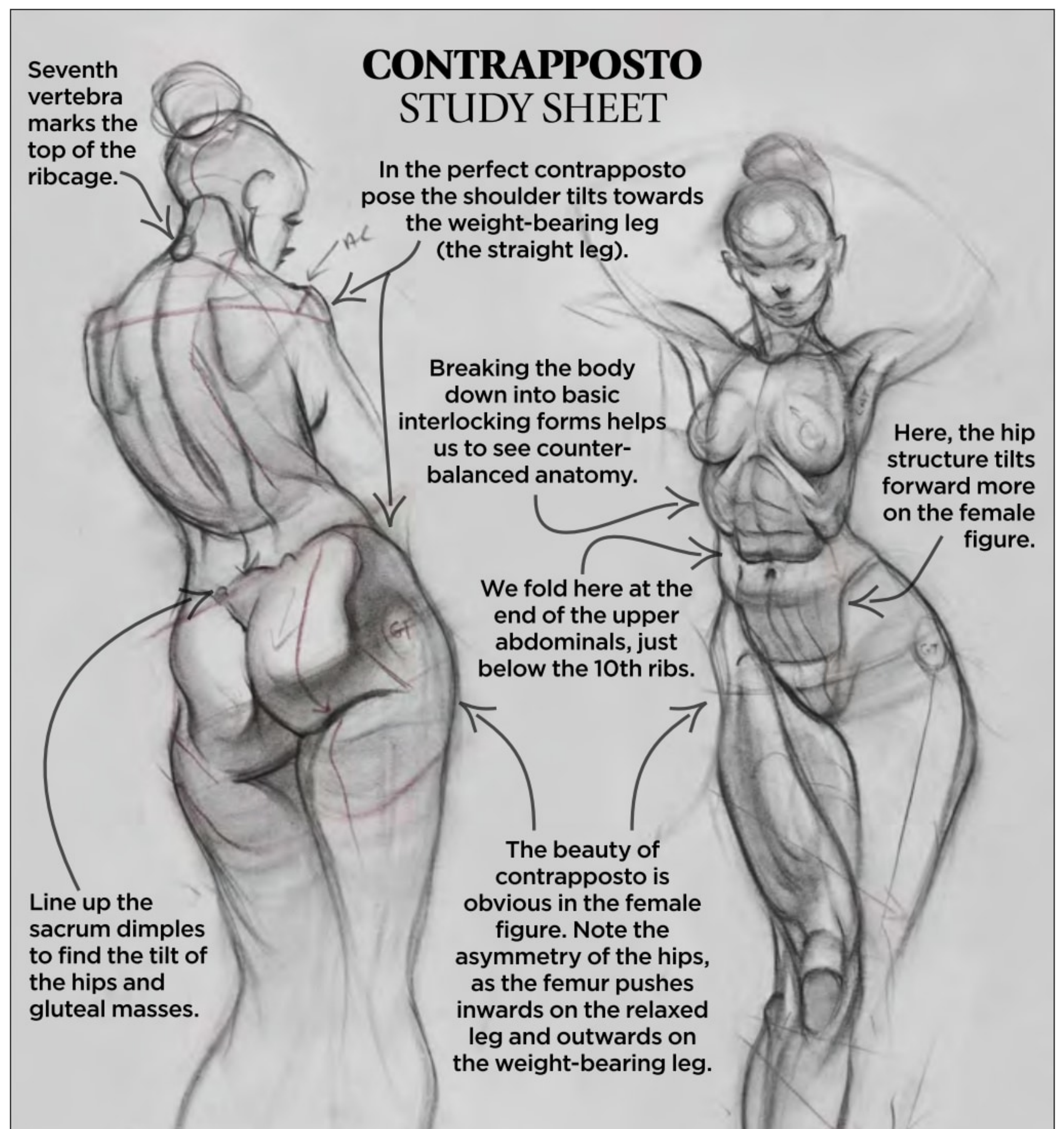
## 13 Working to scale by thinning my lines

Using a mono eraser I thin some of the line widths. Pastel paper is wonderful to work with, but due to the grain it's a fight to achieve thin lines when working on a relatively small scale. This drawing would be easier to work with at twice this size, but there are always workarounds.



## 14 A big reward awaits...

Using erasers, tissue and paper stumps for background texture draw the eye to the contrasting tones of the smooth skin. Sanguine on toned paper is slow, but worth the effort. I spend over three hours pushing and blending into the grainy surface. Take time over your sanguine drawings and you'll be rewarded.



## 15 Contrapposto study sheet

Having fought the boxy nature of the male figure it's worth taking a break to enjoy the rhythmic flow of the female figure. The Venus de Milo statue is worth studying to appreciate the gestural difference between male and female anatomy.



# Workshops





# ArtRage & Photoshop PAINT EXPRESSIVE PORTRAIT ART

Learn how **Phil Galloway** uses ArtRage 5 to paint a texture-filled portrait that's full of colour and character



## Artist PROFILE

**Phil Galloway**  
LOCATION: England

Phil's a contemporary fine and digital artist who specialises in portraiture. His work has been exhibited globally and he's produced artwork for some of the biggest companies in tech and sport.  
<https://ifxm.ag/philg>

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**28  
CUSTOM  
BRUSHES!**  
INCLUDING

**RESOURCES**  
**WORKSHOP  
BRUSHES**

**ARTRAGE**

**CUSTOM BRUSHES:**  
DAUB EXPRESSIVE  
BRISTLE GOUCHE

This brush is used to create the contours and look of the man's skin.

**DAUB IMPRESSIONIST 01**

Used to 'fracture' the paint to create an abstract blossom look.



I'm creating a portrait piece for this workshop. I'll take you through each step of my process, from creating a new file and loading up a reference image, sketching out initial shapes and forms, through to blocking in and adding thicker textured paint using ArtRage's Palette

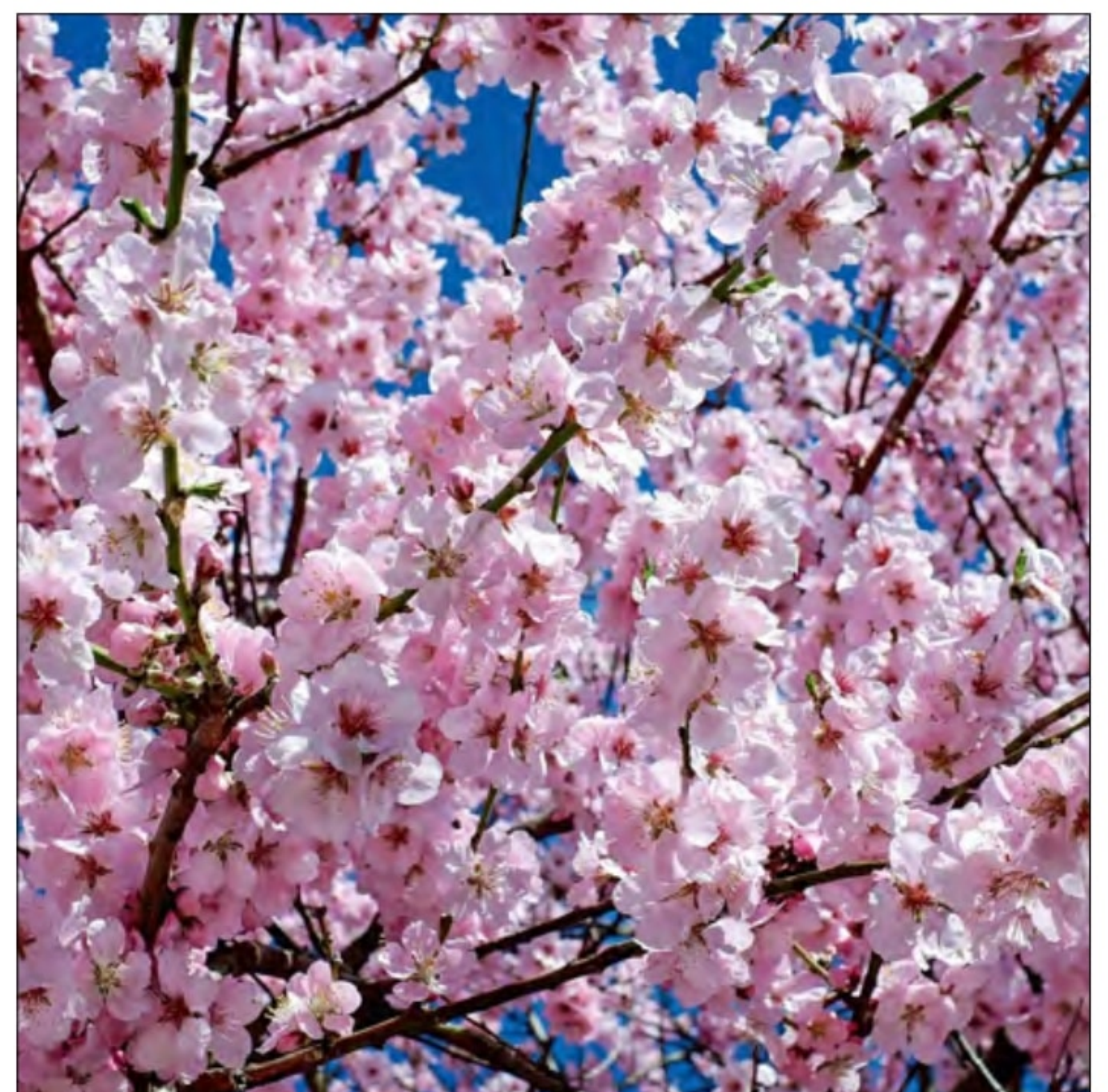
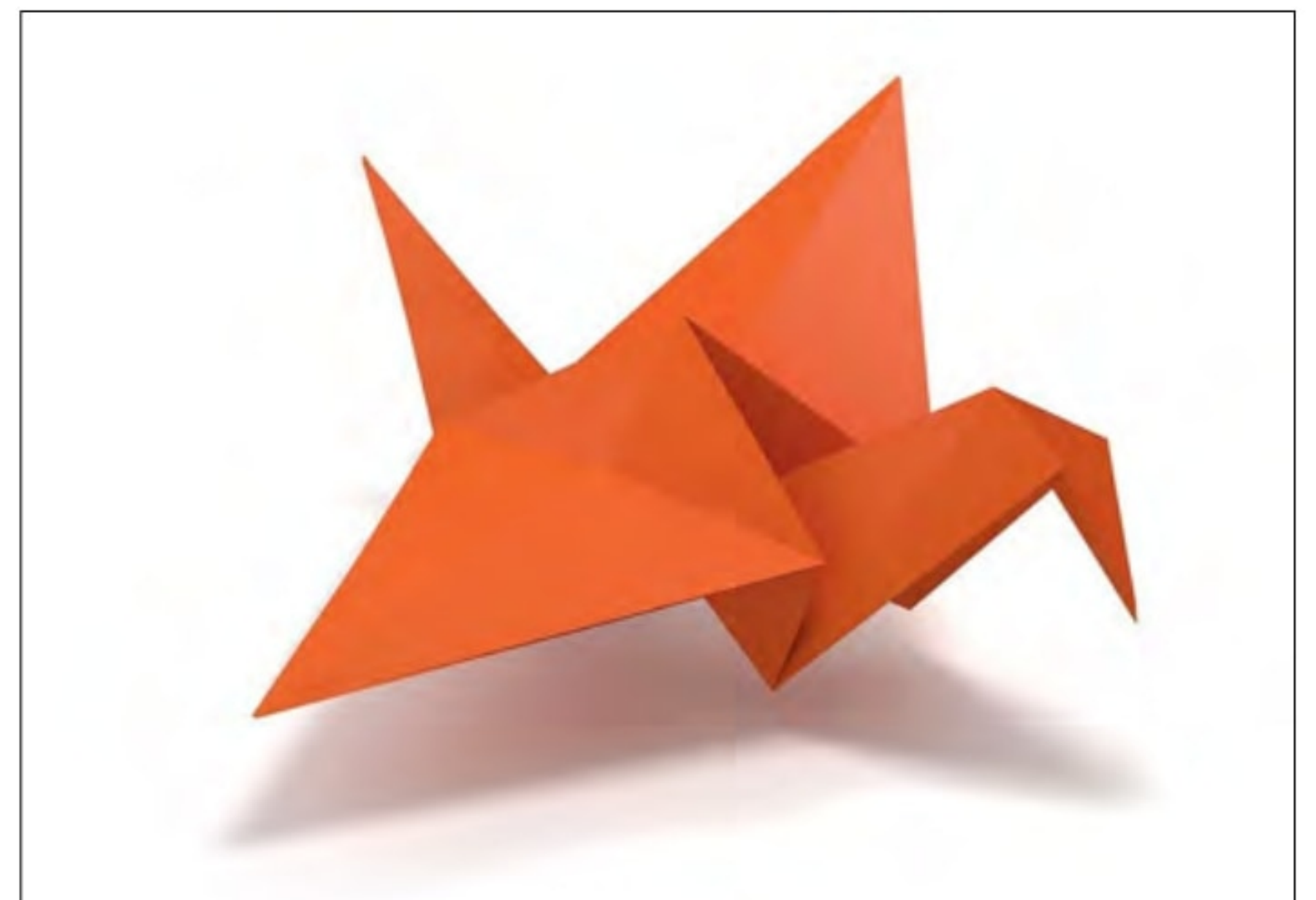
knife, and utilising custom brushes to create more texture and movement. I'll also show you how to add some final flourishes, such as grunge backgrounds and paper textures, as we export the ArtRage painting into Photoshop.

I like to echo my approach to traditional art in my digital process, so the process shouldn't feel too alien

or unusual if you come from a fine art background. The workshop shows how the screen really does become a canvas before you. The portrait I'll be working on is of an old man in an abstract colourful setting, so I'll keep my paint loose and choppy to create vibrancy and interest in a modern manner, all the while adhering to real-world painting techniques.

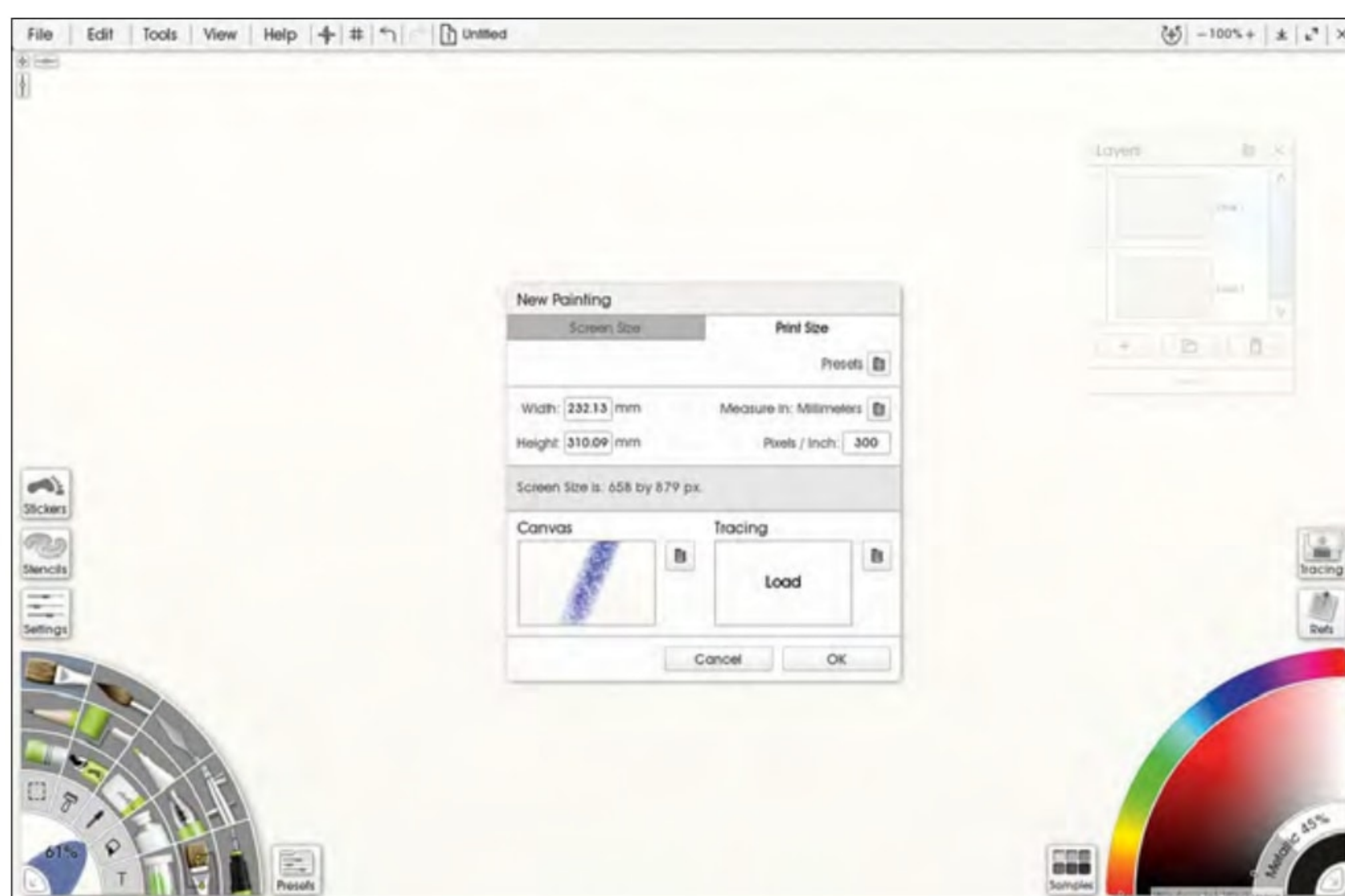


**1 Choosing your subject matter**  
Unless you've been commissioned to paint someone's picture, it can be a bit of a struggle for artists to source royalty-free images as references. No need to worry: with a bit of searching a range of websites that have stock images ready for you to use can be found. This workshop uses high-resolution photo references of an elderly man, origami and tree blossom from the fantastic free image website Pixabay ([www.pixabay.com](http://www.pixabay.com)). ➡



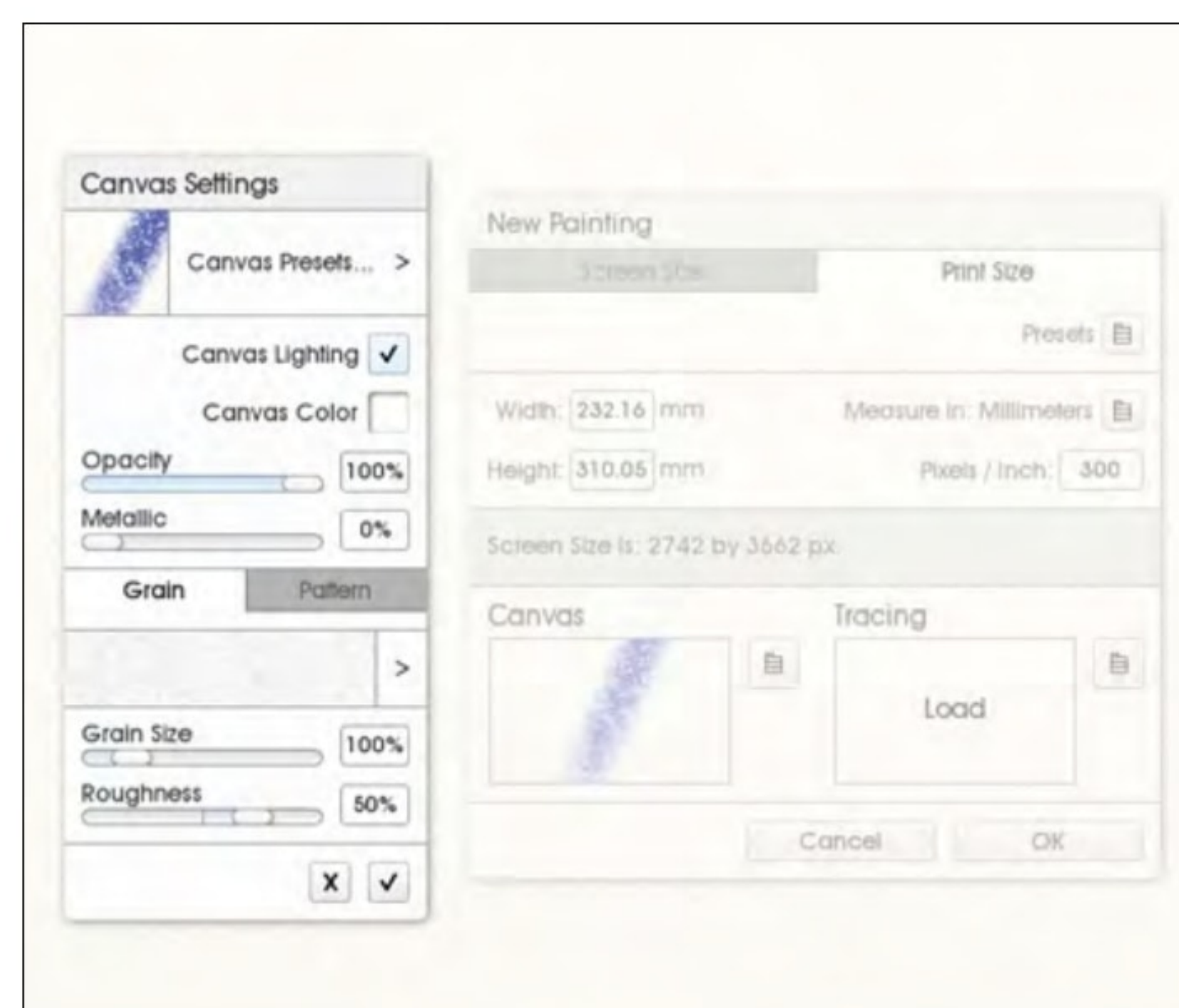


# Workshops



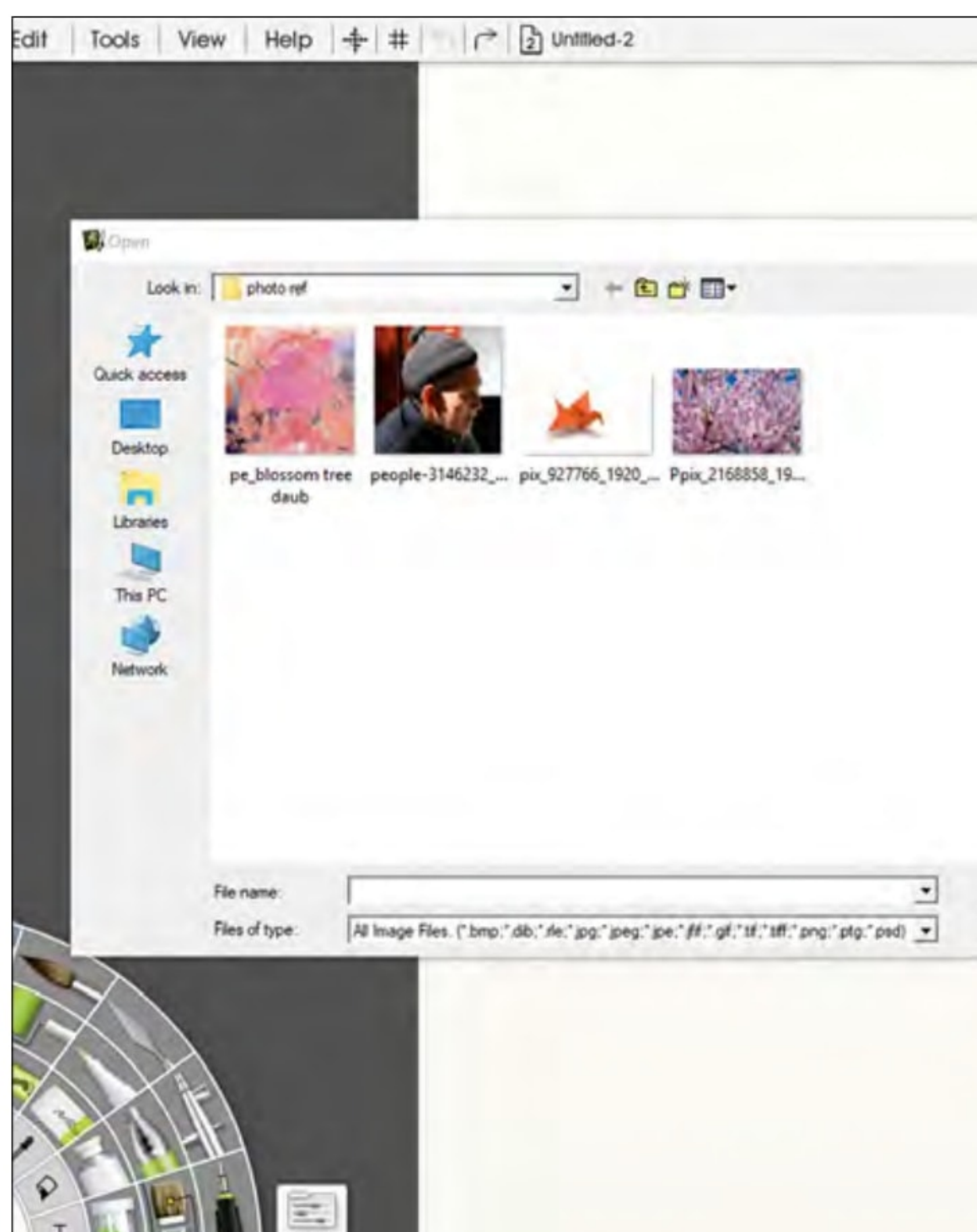
## 2 Creating a new file in ArtRage

In ArtRage, I click File in the top-left corner. A drop-down box will appear with various options. I press New Painting and a box appears. This is where you set your dimensions and what surface you'll be working on. I select the Print Size tab and set the dimensions for my painting, which are 232x310mm. I make sure to change the default 72 pixels/inch setting up to 300, which will ensure a high-resolution image for our end painting.



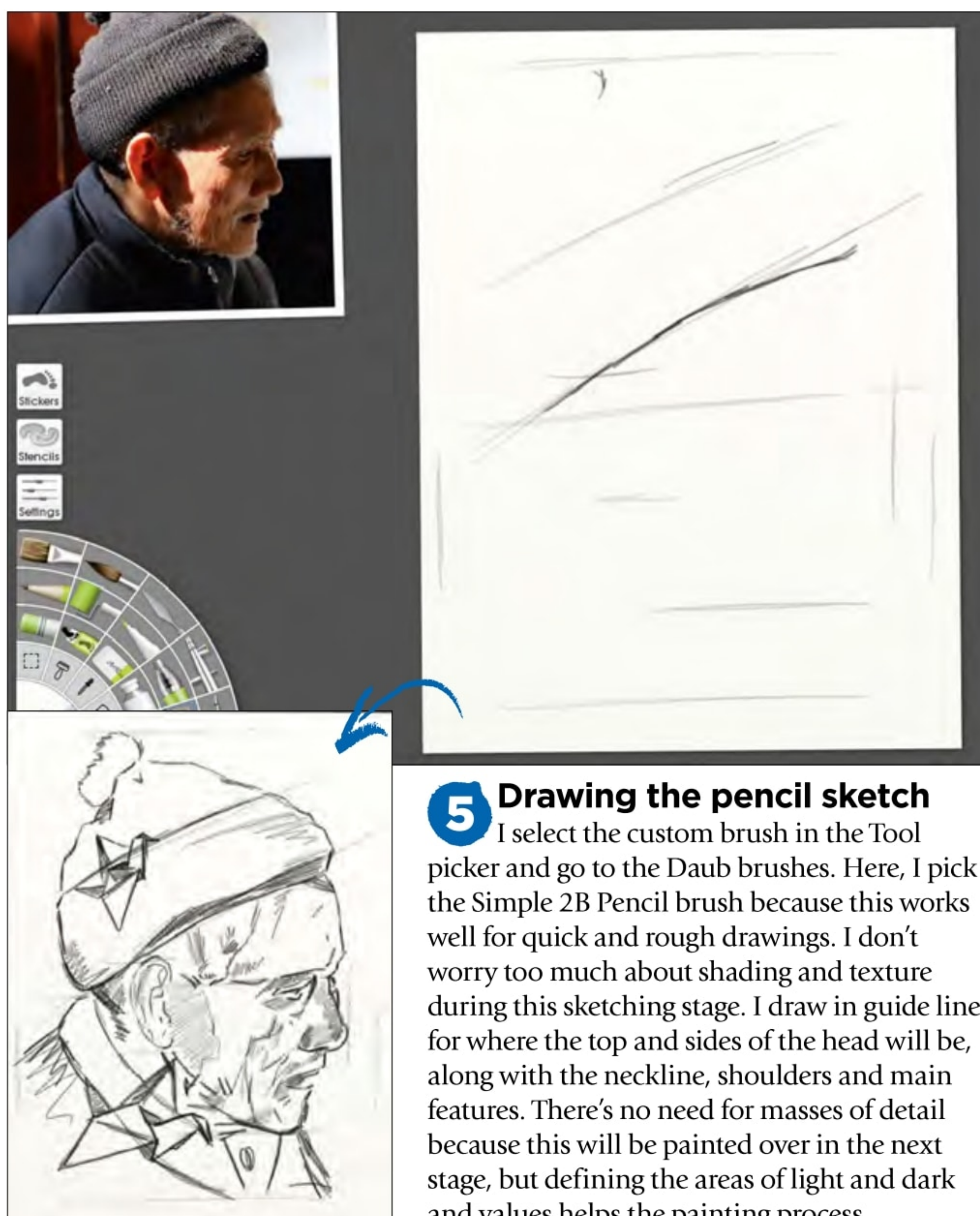
## 3 Selecting the canvas texture

The next stage when creating a new file is to click the box showing the brushstroke across a texture surface. This will open up a new window in which the canvas colour, texture, roughness and lighting can all be tweaked. This will alter how the paint flows and adheres to the surface, so investigate which could suit your style. For this workshop I'll be using a lightly textured paper, which adds a nice, light grain to the paint flow.



## 4 Importing a reference photo

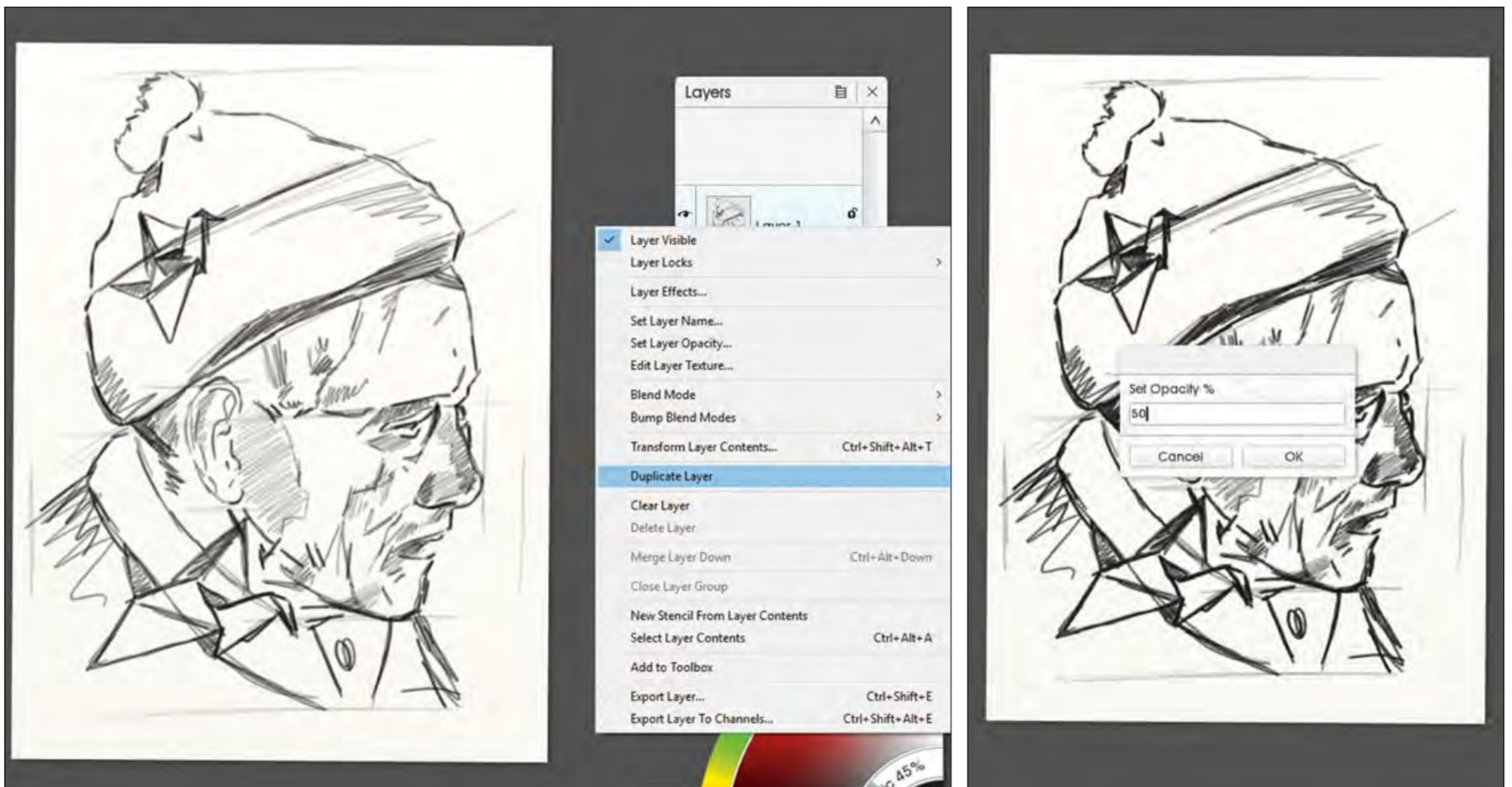
ArtRage enables you to import your reference image to sit on top of your workspace and be moved around, as if you were copying from a photo on your desk. Simply select Refs on the right-hand side of the screen and, in the new box that appears, either click the file image or the Post-it note. A new window will open where the downloaded/saved image of the old man and origami reference can be found and placed. Double-click the image and it now opens in ArtRage.



## 5 Drawing the pencil sketch

I select the custom brush in the Tool picker and go to the Daub brushes. Here, I pick the Simple 2B Pencil brush because this works well for quick and rough drawings. I don't worry too much about shading and texture during this sketching stage. I draw in guide lines for where the top and sides of the head will be, along with the neckline, shoulders and main features. There's no need for masses of detail because this will be painted over in the next stage, but defining the areas of light and dark and values helps the painting process.





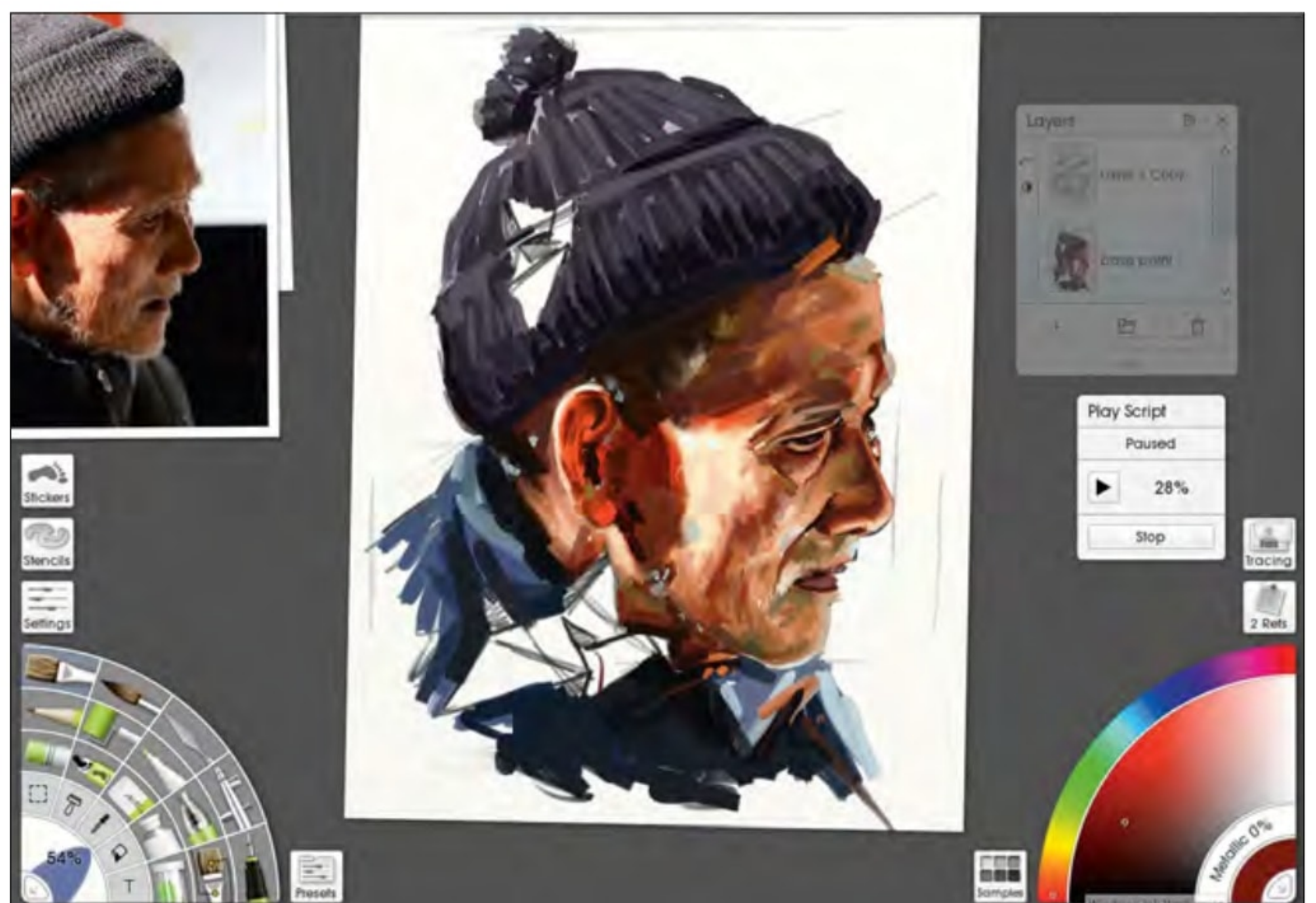
## 6 Duplicating the pencil layer

A helpful way of keeping track of your painting and not losing sight of your shapes and lighting lines is to duplicate your initial sketch layer and to place it on top of your work. In the Layers tab on the right, click the small file image on your pencil layer to open a menu, select Duplicate Layer and your pencil sketch will be duplicated on top in a new layer. Tap the black dot in the duplicated layer and set the Transparency to 50 per cent so that the lines don't interfere too much with your painting, but still act as a guide. Remember to delete or hide this layer at the end or when your painting is fleshed out enough to work without it.



## 7 Adding layers

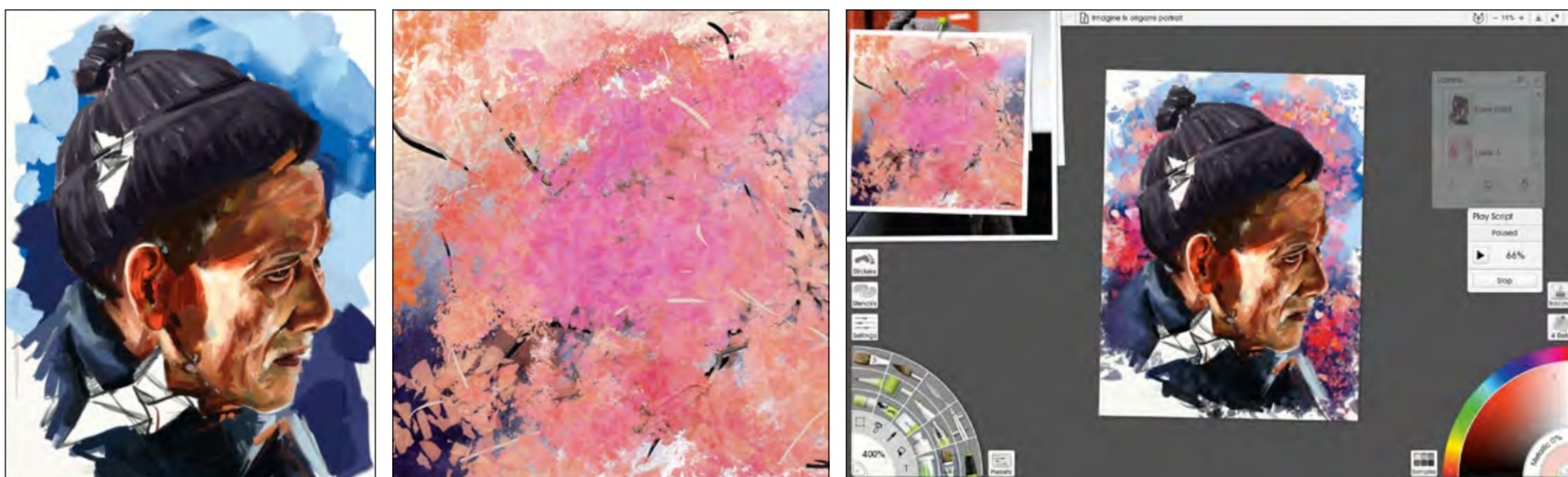
Before moving on to blocking in colour, I need to create a new layer for the paint. This is the main difference between fine art and digital art as usually paint would be directly applied over these lines on a canvas. However, painting digitally gives you the freedom to choose to keep these lines on a separate layer, in case they need tweaking at a later stage. Much like in Photoshop, I select the Layers box on the right-hand side of the screen and click the plus button. The new layer is now created and can be dragged in between the two pencil layers, ready to work on. I call this layer base something suitable: 'paint' or 'blocking in'.



## 8 Blocking in your colours

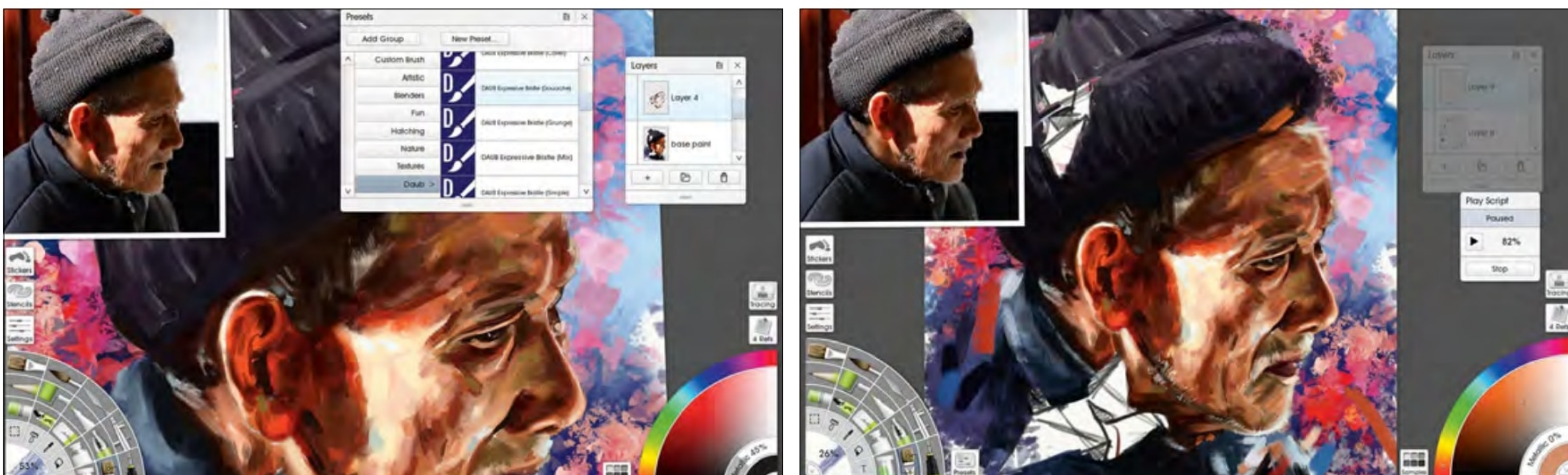
I don't want to add too much paint on the canvas during this blocking-in stage, so I select the Oil Brush tool from the Tool picker. Using this tool stops the painting from becoming muddy and hard to manage, and puts into the practice the 'fat over lean' rule that traditional artists follow. Next, I click the brush's Settings box and pull the slider labelled Loading right down to between four and nine per cent. This now gives me a dry brush with which to roughly paint in the tones, highlights and shaded areas, adding definition and structure to the portrait. The Palette Knife tool can be used to further blend the paint to fill in any gaps. ➡➡





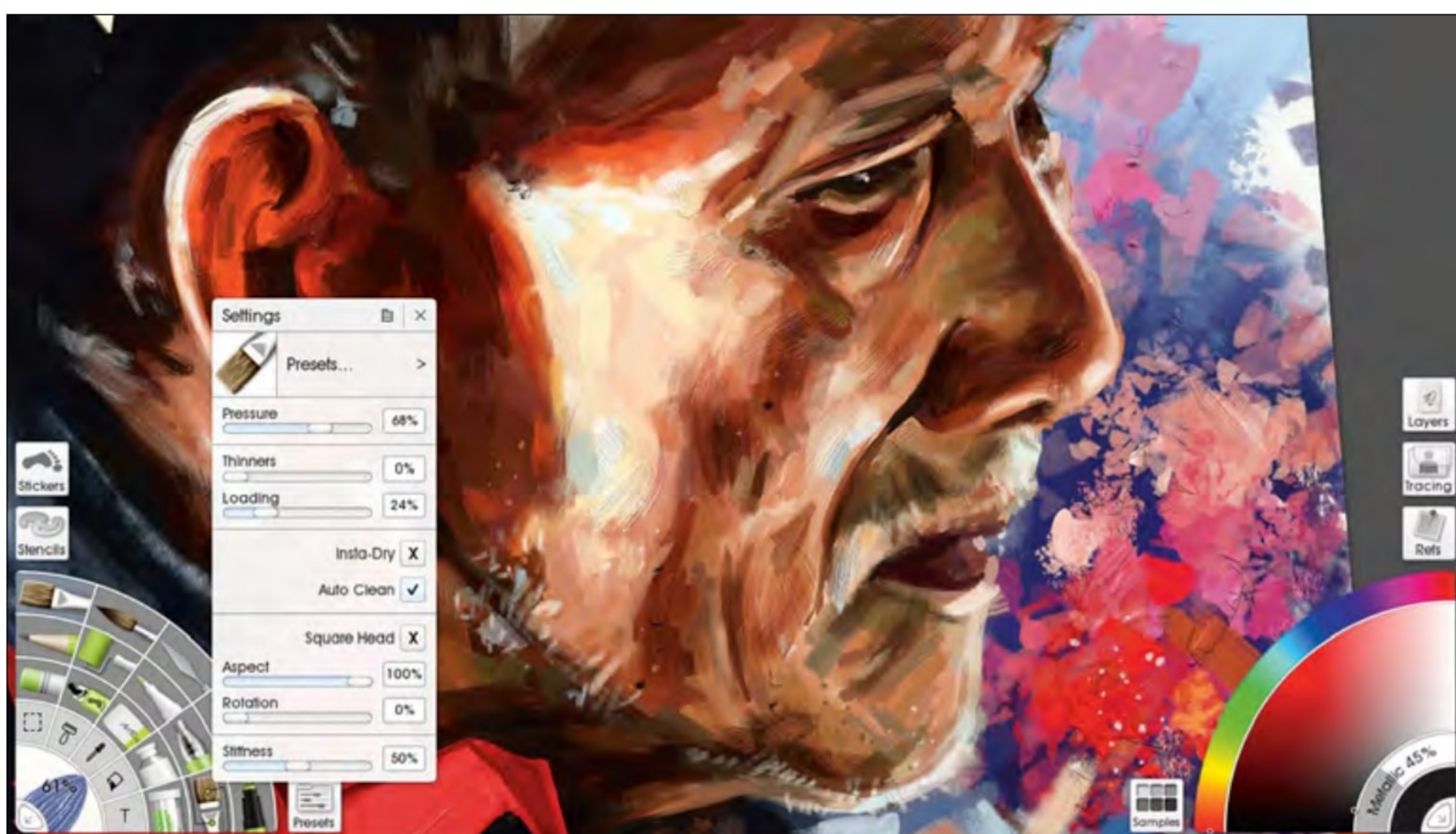
## 9 Developing an abstract background

I place a new layer underneath the blocking-in paint layer. Then I select the Normal Brush tool, enlarge it to over 300 per cent and build up a loose covering, using bold strokes and varying shades. Next, I select the Palette Knife tool with no Loading on it and push the malleable paint around. For the abstract blossom, I create a new layer and loosely paint in bright pinks and reds before selecting the Daub Impressionist 01 custom brush to fracture the paint across the canvas. The harder you press, the bigger the paint splinters. This creates some wonderful effects.



## 10 Make use of some custom brushes

ArtRage has a tool that enables you to create any kind of texture or brush. These textures can flesh out a portrait or scene and add vibrancy and movement. Either experiment with the custom brush designer, use the stock ArtRage brushes and textures, or download a set like the Daub Brushes by Paolo Limoncelli (<https://gumroad.com/l/ohqzS/phil>), who's kindly allowed us to include them with this workshop's resources. I use the Expressive Bristle Gouache brush for the skin, which enhances the nature of the wrinkles and builds up the chiaroscuro across the face.

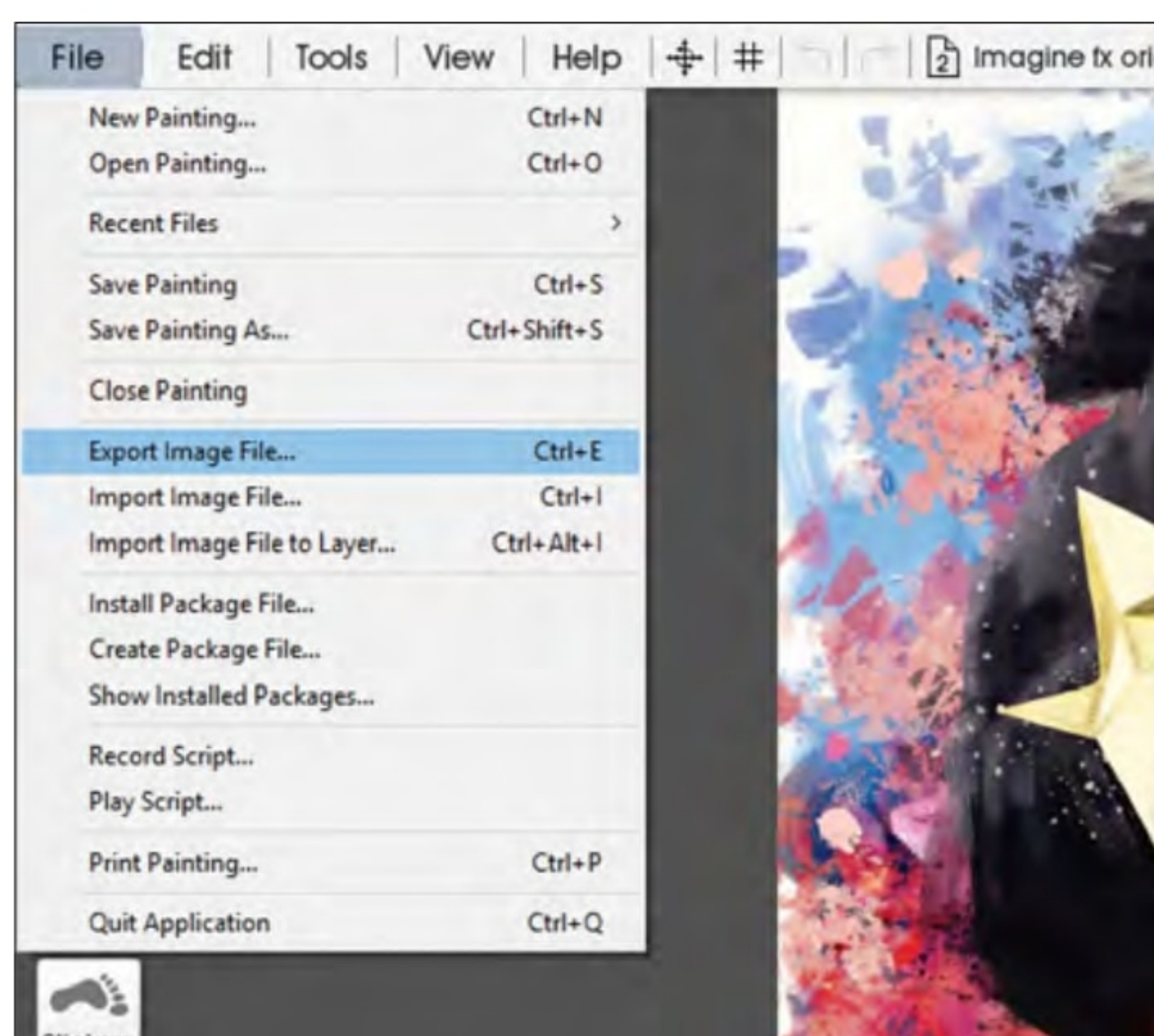


## 11 Creating a raised brushstroke texture

Unless you've loaded your brush with paint in the previous stages, your work could be a little lacking in 3D textures. Here, I create a new layer and drag it down to the bottom of the layers, where it's underneath everything else. Any thick paint or texture put on this layer will now cause the paint on top to rise and bobble. This quickly adds depth and chunkiness to the brushstrokes above.

I select the Normal Oil brush and raise the Loading to between 20 and 30. I follow the strokes that are above it and paint in these areas, causing them to raise as if painted by a real oiled brush. This can bring the work alive under close scrutiny and when it's printed out for display.

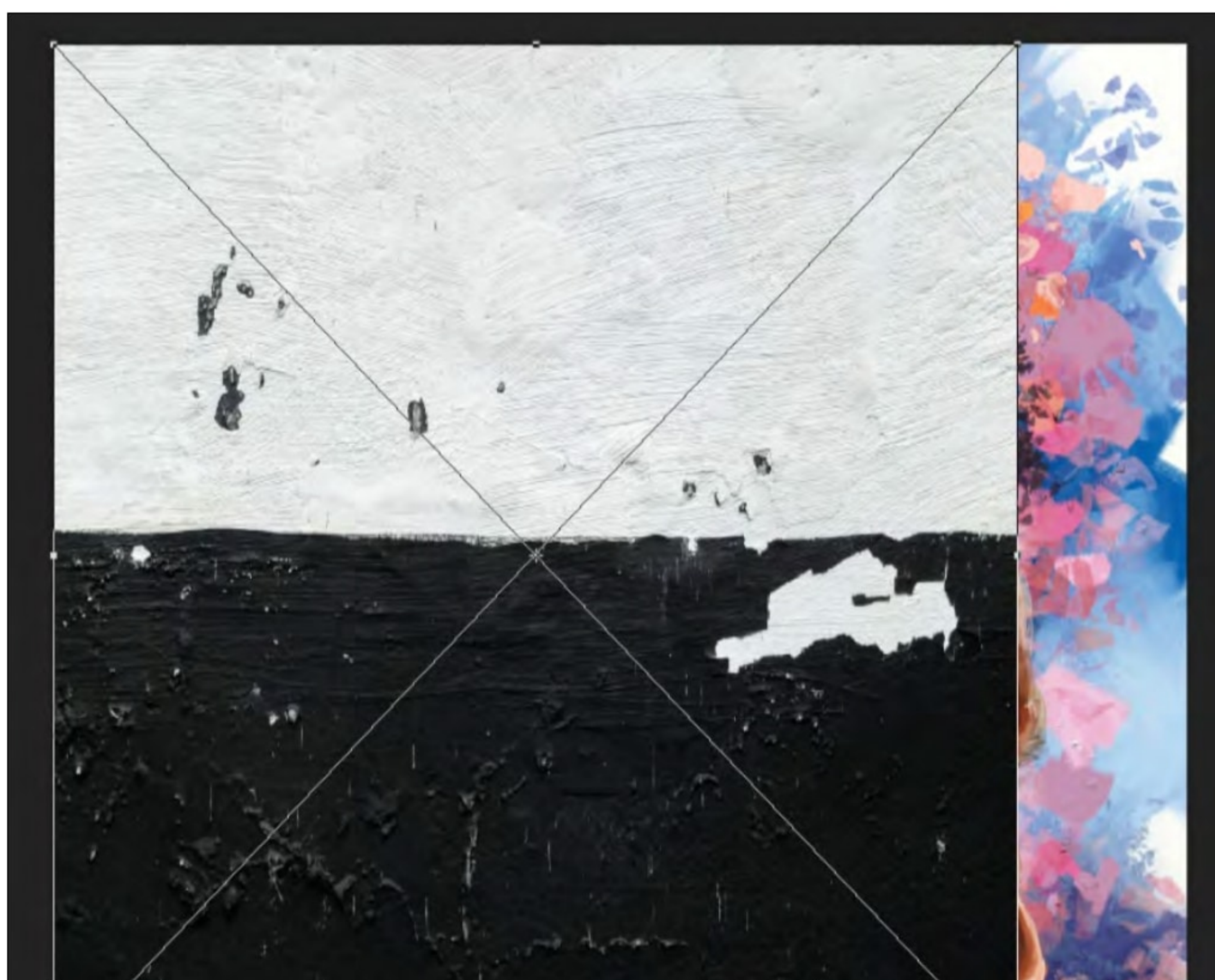




## 12 Saving and exporting

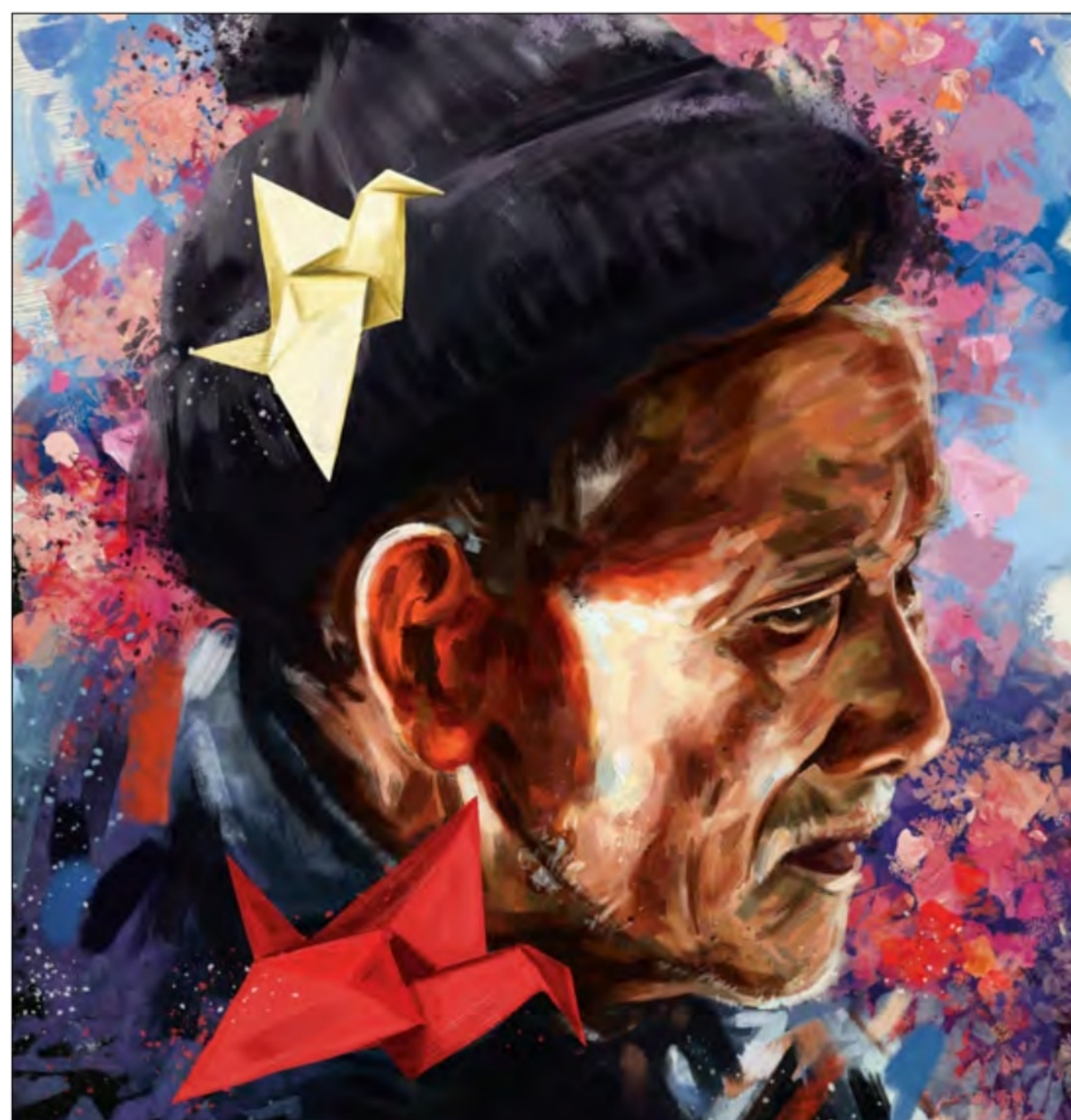
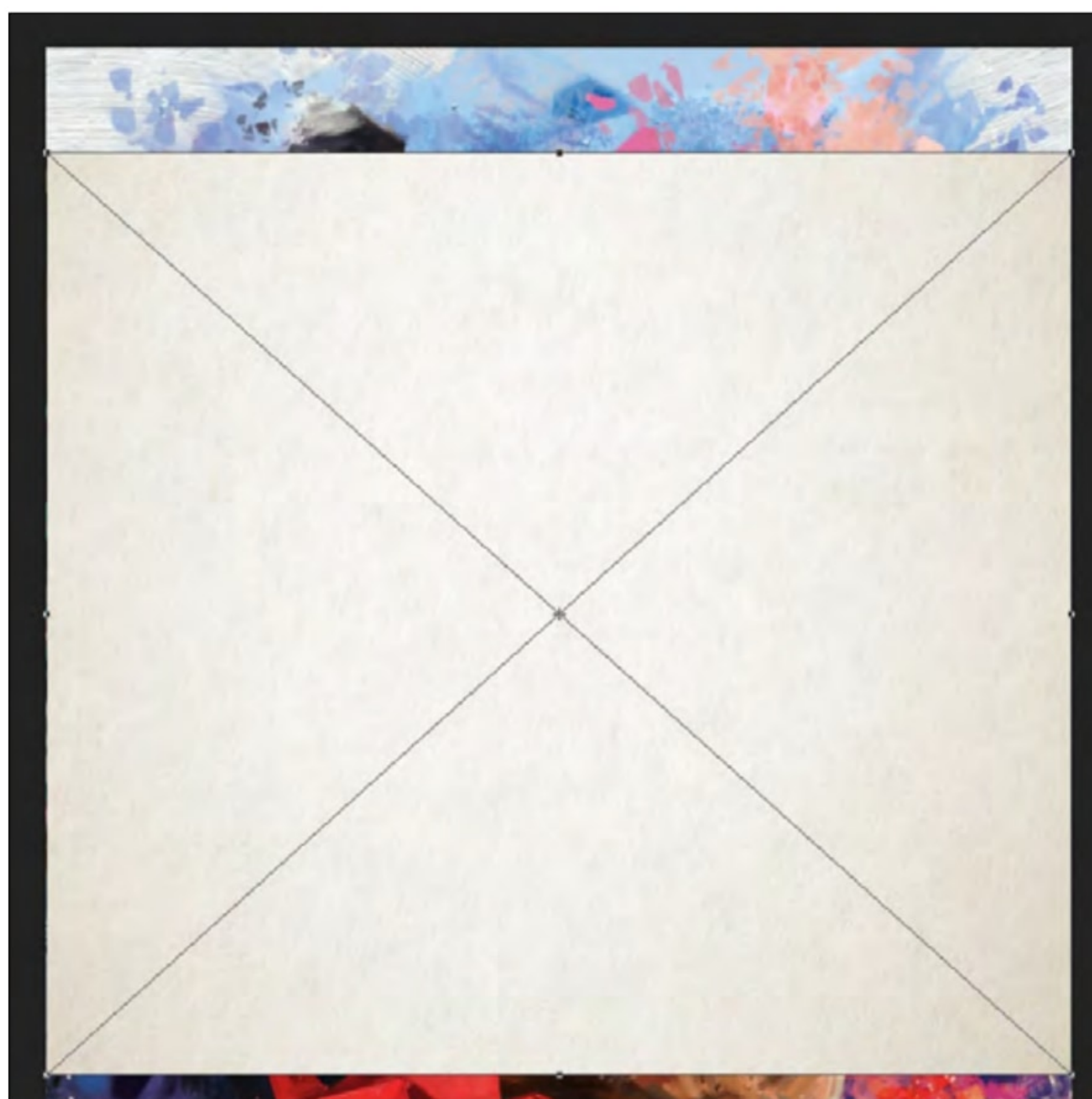
It's always good practice to save the artwork throughout the painting process, just in case the app crashes! To do this is easy: simply click the File button at the top of the screen and click Save Painting as. Then name the file as you would a file on a computer. Once named only click the Save button as you work.

When I'm finished in ArtRage I can choose to export my image as a JPG, PNG or PSD. Because more work needs to be done on the painting in Photoshop, I select the Export Image File option and in the open window drop-down I click PSD. The painting is now saved as a Photoshop file, ready to be manipulated and tweaked.



## 13 Apply a base texture In Photoshop

Although the ArtRage painting is already on a paper texture, it can be further enhanced using stock textures and grunge elements in Photoshop. I head to Pixabay and search through its selection of textures and surfaces, choosing a wall texture with white and black paint on it to fill in the lower areas of white in the painting. I open my saved Photoshop file and drop the wall texture on top of it, stretching it to fit. I drag this layer to the first layer above the paper layer at the bottom of the layers and adjust it to suit, deleting any unwanted areas that are visible.



## 14 Place a final paper texture overlay and finishing up

To keep the image from looking too stark and lurid, as well as to enhance the realism of the piece, I place a paper texture on the top layer. Again sourcing from Pixabay, I drop the Ivory Off White paper image on to the painting in a new layer. I stretch it to fill the canvas and click Multiply in the layers tab. Then I adjust the Transparency to around 50 per cent, so as to subtly show the paper texture and warm the colours a little. The painting is now complete and can be saved and shared with the world.



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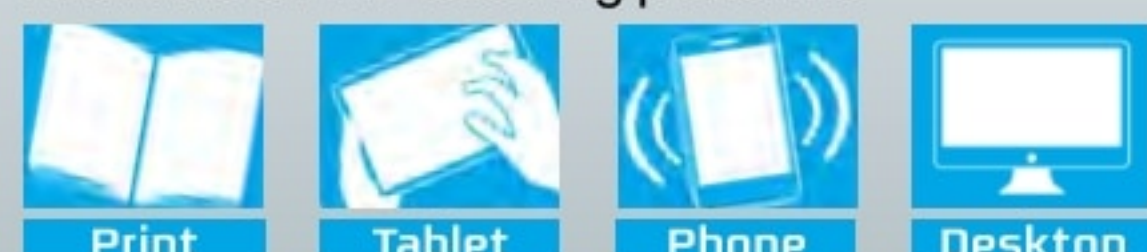


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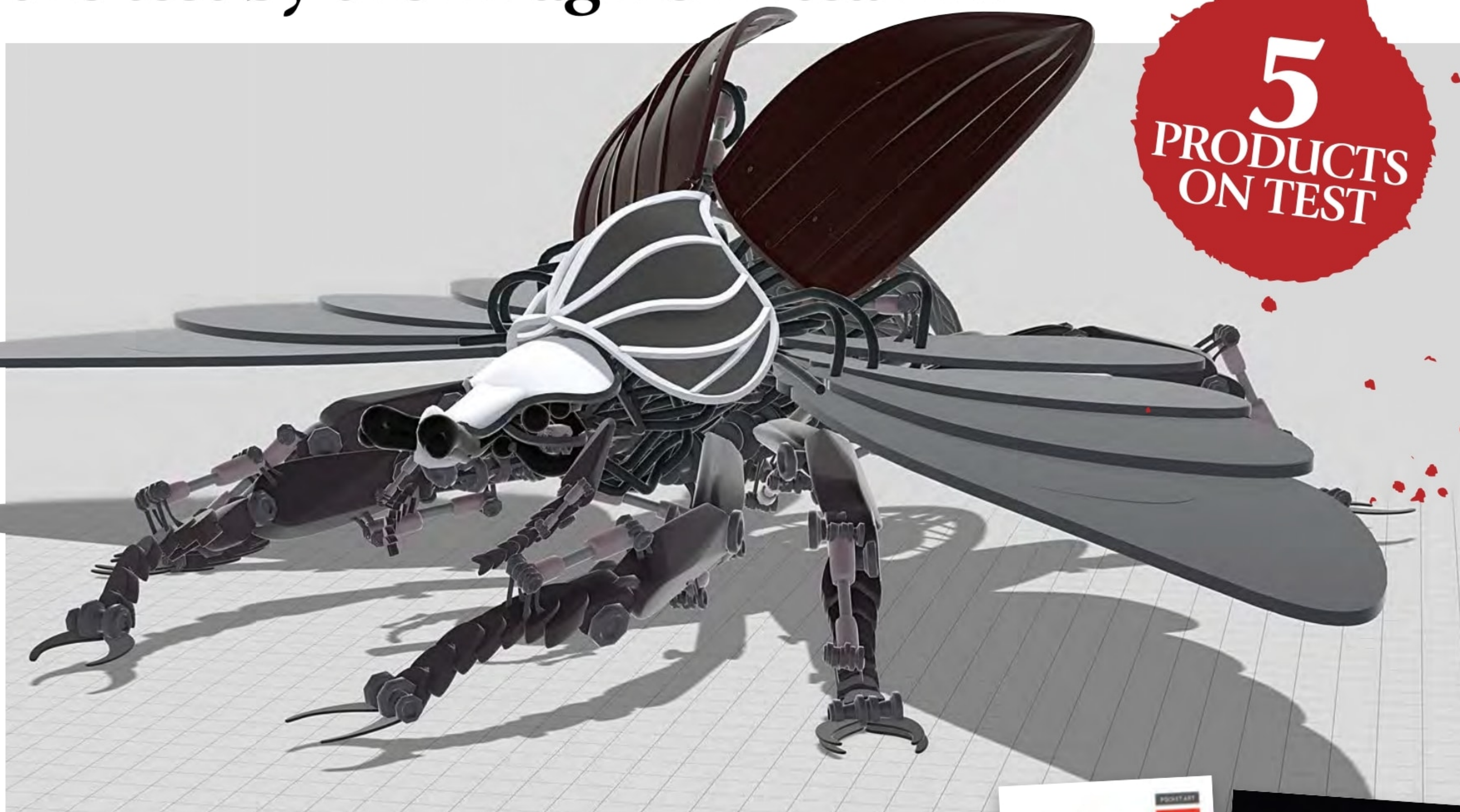
# NO.1 FOR DIGITAL ARTISTS ImagineFX Reviews



**Artist's Choice Award**  
Art resources with a five-star rating receives the ImagineFX Artist's Choice award!

The latest art resources are put to the test by the ImagineFX team...

**5**  
PRODUCTS  
ON TEST



## SOFTWARE

### 92 Gravity Sketch 1.5

This affordable sculpting program brings together the tools of a 3D sculpting program with the versatility of VR.

## TRAINING

### 95 Found A Friend

Art director Goro Fujita shows you how to make a technically challenging lighting setup easier to paint than you think.

## BOOKS

### 96 They Drew as They Pleased: The Hidden Art of Disney's Mid-Century Era

Discover the ground-breaking artists and timeless art of Disney, during one of its most prolific periods of animated creativity.



### 97 Pocket Art: Portrait Drawing

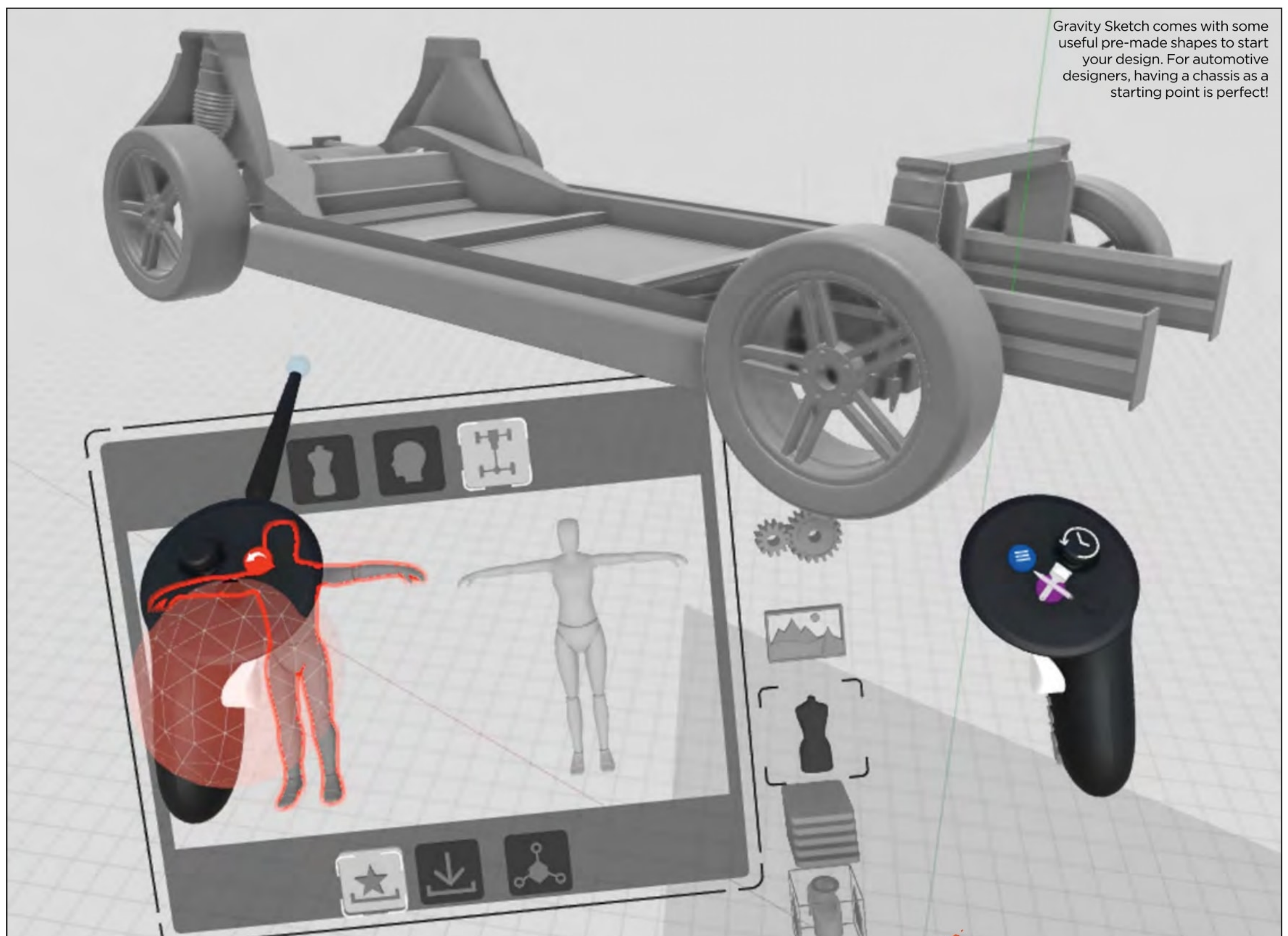
An inspirational, compact portrait-drawing book that covers everything from the beginner's basics to tips for professionals.

### 97 Nuthin' But Mech 4

The final outing of a compilation of imaginatively designed walking machines aims to go out with a bang and a crash!

RATINGS EXPLAINED ★★★★★ Magnificent ★★★★★ Great ★★★★★ Good ★★★★★ Poor ★★★★★ Atrocious





Gravity Sketch comes with some useful pre-made shapes to start your design. For automotive designers, having a chassis as a starting point is perfect!

## Gravity Sketch 1.5

MAC & PC



**LIGHT TOUCH** Creative VR programs are evolving. First we saw sculpting and painting strokes in the air, but what about a full 3D modelling package?

**Price** £23 (one-off price for Core version); £76/month (Pro version) **Company** Gravity Sketch **Web** [www.gravitysketch.com](http://www.gravitysketch.com)

Once an example of “wouldn’t it be great if...” blue-sky thinking, designing and painting within virtual reality is now a option for artists. Indeed, there are many VR avenues you can go down – assuming you have the right hardware, of course.

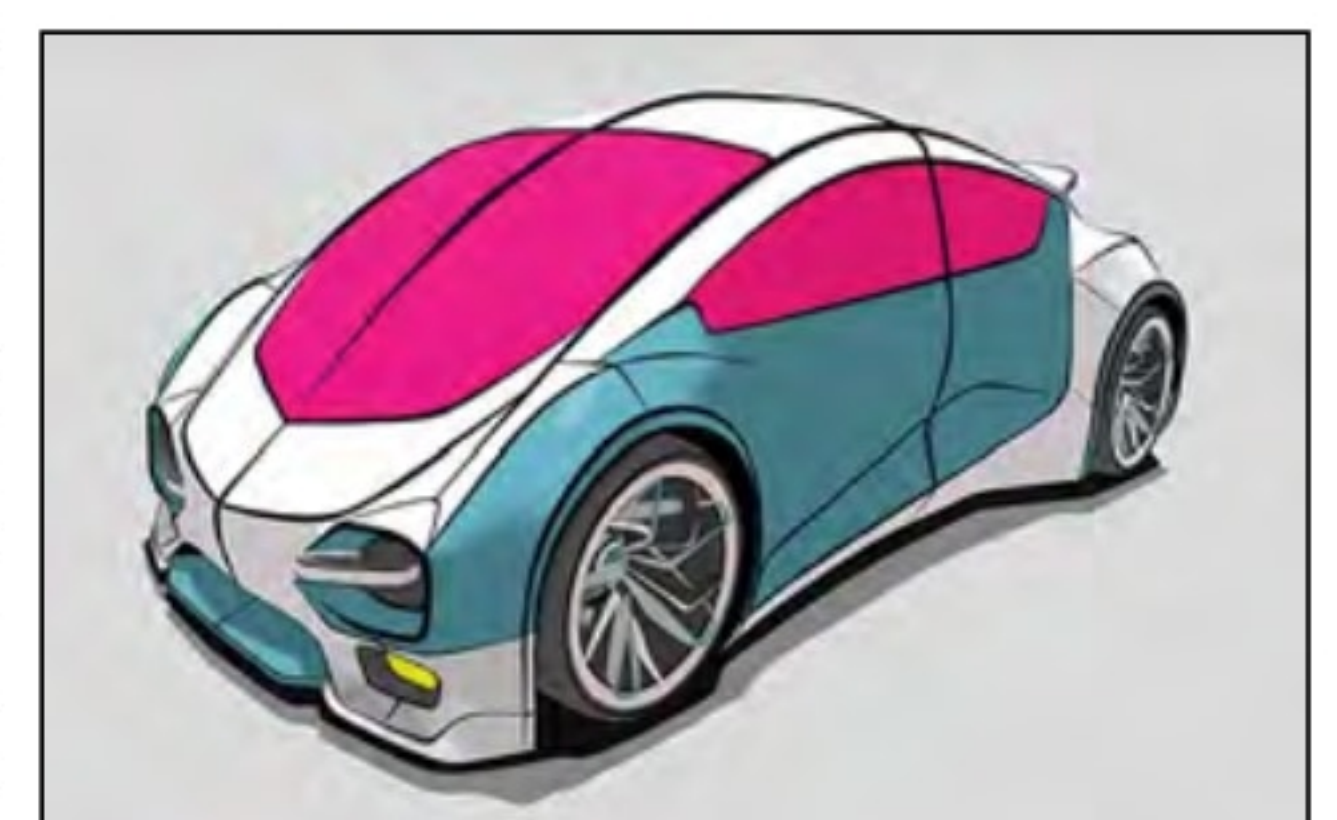
Gravity Sketch was developed in the UK and started out as an app on an iPad, before evolving into a VR version on Oculus Rift, HTC Vive and the Microsoft Mixed Reality Headset. There are two versions: the Core option costs £23 and has reduced functionality, such as limited number of layers and export choices. The Pro

version has a monthly subscription, which might put some people off.

Gravity Sketch works like a spline-based design package: think Fusion 360 rather than 3D Coat. There are no sculpting tools yet, but because it’s aimed at designers who use curves, patches and manipulating geometry with control vertices (points), you wouldn’t expect them out of the box.

The available tools are found on your non-drawing hand controller and include options for Ink, Stokes, Revolve, Curved surface, Volume and Primitives. While that isn’t a huge list of features, it gives you what you need to make any shape you have in mind.

A futuristic car designed by James Robbins, showing his application of flowing strokes and a great use of curved surfaces.



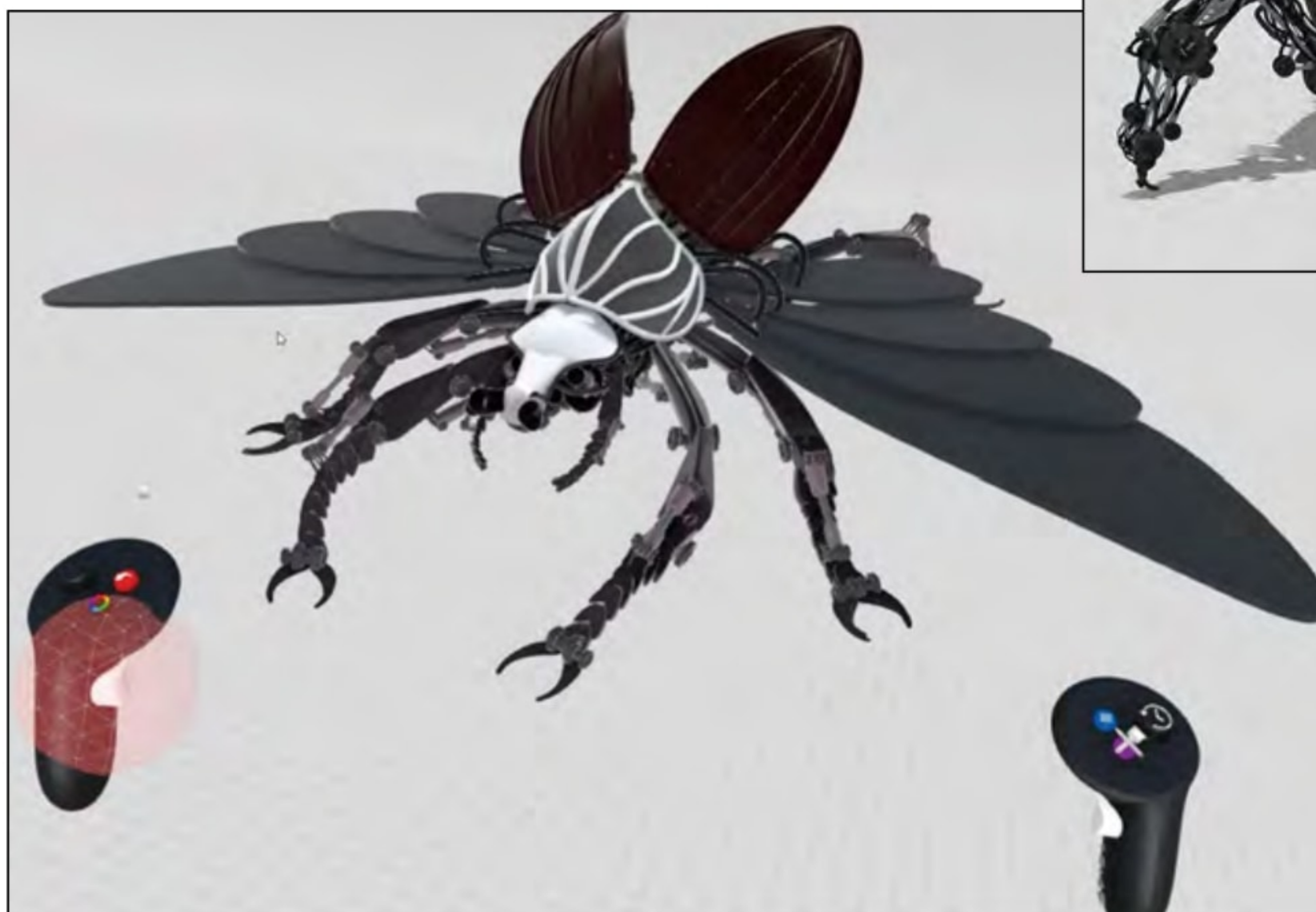
Ink and Stoke enable you to paint strokes in the air in front of you. You can then taper and even edit the control points once you’ve drawn out the stroke. There’s a full colour wheel at your disposal, while strokes can be painted in your chosen colour and





One fun feature in Gravity Sketch is the Curved Surface tool. You simply drag out your geometry with your hands.

This Spider Tank concept by Glen Southern was photographed with a camera running inside Gravity Sketch.



A mechanical beetle concept by Glen Southern. There's no interface with Gravity Sketch, other than the tools available on your hand controllers.

## “ Concept artists are going to love working in Gravity Sketch, with its minimal interface and effective tools ”

edited afterwards. The Revolve tool is a lathe of sorts: by dragging out a stroke or clicking points you can create wheels, cylinders, jet engines and other engineering details. Again, after the initial shape is created with a single click you can go back in and edit the control points to refine the design. Curved surface enables you to click in two places in space. A surface will be then created in the space between.

Version 1.5 brings in a raft of new features that the community has been calling for. Group/Ungroup helps to keep your scenes organised. Bridge Canvas gives you the ability to stretch a surface between strokes. This means

that you can quickly build up a model with a lot less cleanup, because you can move points into place at the end.

Concept artists are going to love working in Gravity Sketch, with its minimal interface and limited but effective tools. If you were expecting a sculpting package and an organic workflow model then it might not be your first choice, but new features are regularly added and the program might evolve in new directions. You get a lot for your money in the basic version, but we recommend studying how the extras within the subscription model will fit into your creative workflow before upgrading. 🍷

### DETAILS

#### Features

- Editable curved surfaces
- Export to Rhino (subscription version)
- Powerful 3D sketching tools
- Strokes
- Curves
- Primitive tools
- Grouping and ungrouping
- Materials

#### System Requirements

**PC:** Windows 7 or newer, Intel Core i5 4590 or AMD FX 8350 or greater, 4GB RAM, GeForce GTX 970 or AMD Radeon R9 290 or better, 2GB hard drive space, Oculus Rift, HTC Vive or other compatible head-mounted display setup  
**Mac:** OS X 10.13.2 or newer, 3GHz four-core CPU, Vega 56 graphics, 2GB hard drive space, Oculus Rift, HTC Vive or other compatible head-mounted display setup

#### Rating



### ARTIST INTERVIEW

## GLEN SOUTHERN

*Why artists are looking at VR as a new way to express themselves...*

### What are the advantages of using Gravity Sketch?

Gravity Sketch plays well with other programs like Cinema 4D and Maya. If you model in Gravity and assign materials, they carry over as material selections and you can isolate parts to add materials to.

### Who will like Gravity Sketch?

Top of my head? Technical illustrators, industrial designers, product designers, automotive, concept artists and anyone wanting to bash out their ideas without having to spend weeks learning countless commands. Note that it might not be for you if you want to focus on 3D printing, because the surfaces aren't ready for print without post-work in other software.

### What's your favourite tool?

My favourite tool so far is the Curve Surface tool, while being able to pull sheets of geometry out with my hands is amazing!

### Why do concept artists like Gravity Sketch so much?

Many concept artists use programs like 3D Coat and SketchUp to make rough models and shapes to lay out their scenes and then paint over those shapes. I find being able to lay everything out quickly means that I can spend all my time designing and not fighting technology.

### How are you using Gravity Sketch in your daily life.

So far I've only used Gravity for concept art for design projects. However, we're using it everyday in the studio to explore new ways of designing and trying to fit it into our pipeline.



Glen runs SouthernGFX, a small studio specialising in character and creature design and look development.

[www.southerngfx.co.uk](http://www.southerngfx.co.uk)





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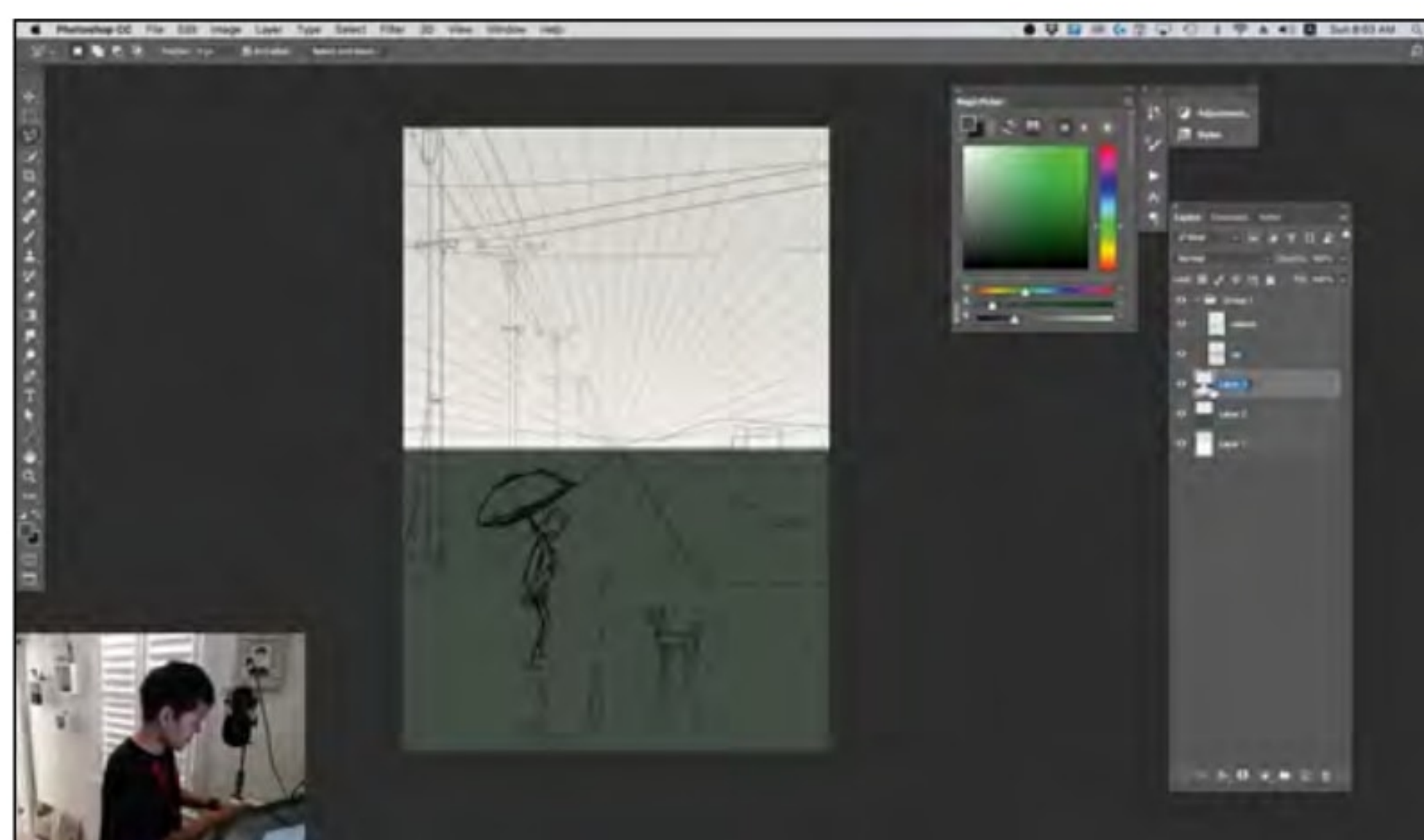
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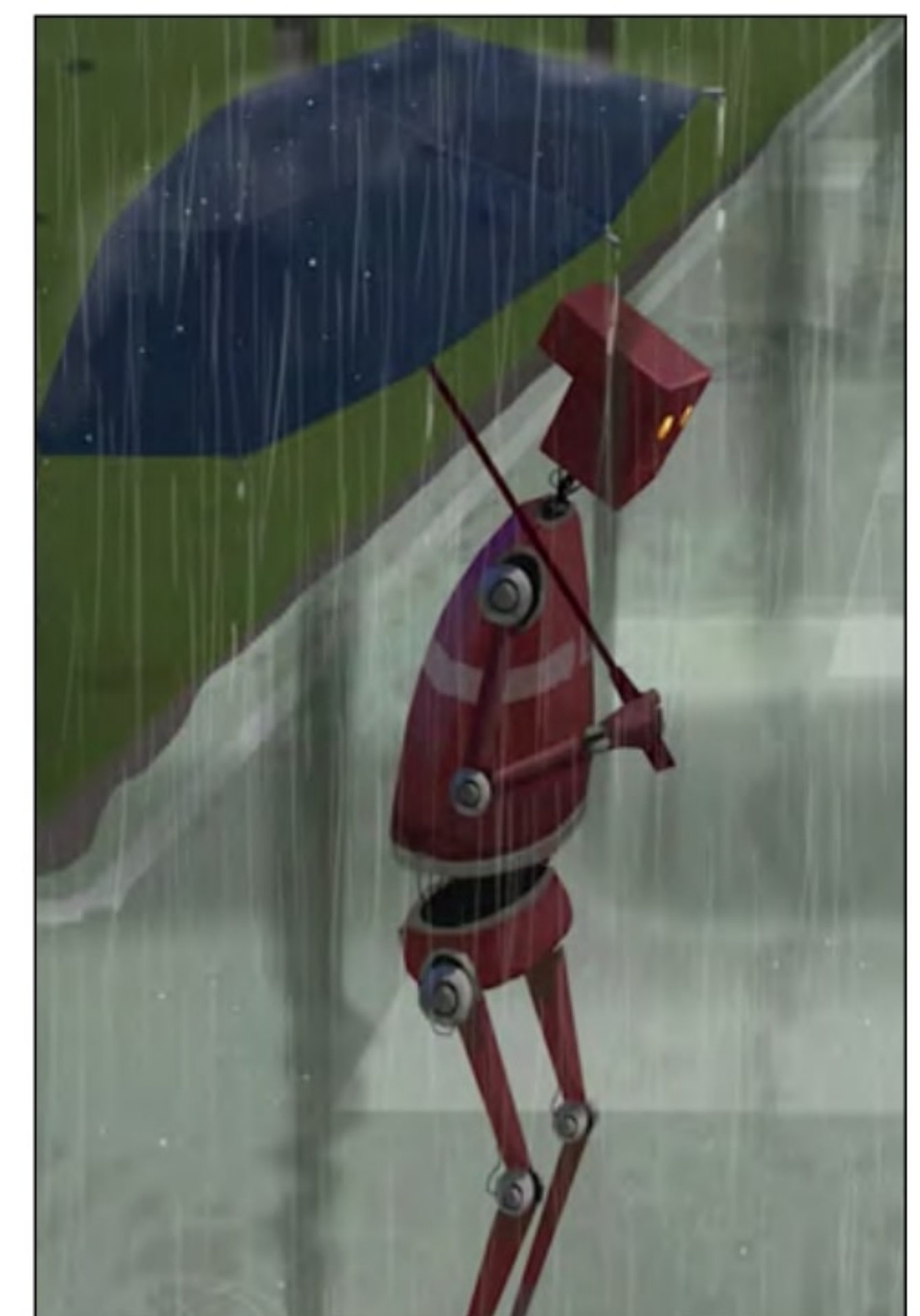


No need to draw every repeating object from scratch: Goro Fujita shows how to duplicate an object and repeat it in perspective.



A straightforward one-point perspective underpins all of Goro's drawing decisions as he builds up the image.

A simple brush Goro made himself enables you to add rain to your images. It's included in the download.



## Found A Friend

**RAIN IT IN** Art director and artist Goro Fujita shows you how to make a technically challenging lighting setup easier to paint than you think

**Publisher** Goro Fujita **Price** £8 **Format** Download **Web** [www.gumroad.com/gorofujita](http://www.gumroad.com/gorofujita)

**P**ainters of environment art will have to deal with diffuse light in their sci-fi or fantasy settings. If you're not familiar with the term, diffuse light basically means the light is being scattered by particles as it travels through the air. As such, rather than the sun dominating as a light source and creating dark shadows, the light is more even, and shadows are weaker.

The rain shower in Goro Fujita's painting is a great example of a situation in nature where you'll encounter diffuse lighting. Colour changes under this light. It doesn't mean less colour is present, but rather just a difference in how an object's colour interacts with environmental and reflected light.

Goro explores all of these avenues as he crafts an image that features the gloomy light you'd expect from overcast skies. Along the way, he delves into many other practical



### DETAILS

#### Topics covered

- Perspective grids
- Step and repeat techniques
- Drawing with lasso tools
- Create shadows in diffuse light
- Depict reflections in diffuse light
- Colour choices in diffuse light
- Rain overlays

**Length**  
96 minutes

#### Rating



techniques. For example, early on he shows how you can rapidly duplicate and transform objects like telegraph poles to create a visual rhythm without drawing everything from scratch.

In those moments where Goro broadens his narration beyond what he's working on, he provides advice on how you can develop as an artist. There are tips for doing practice paintings from reference, and how to carry out daily art exercises.

Finishing details include Goro showing how to overlay showery rain over your image in less than a minute, with the help of a Photoshop brush he provides as part of the download. He also demonstrates an easy way to create raindrop ripples that follow perspective. These tips enable you to enhance your entire image in just a few minutes, and are typical of the smart but simple philosophy Goro personifies throughout the video. His techniques are pragmatic and efficient, but always married to creativity.

### ARTIST PROFILE

## GORO FUJITA

Goro is an art director at Oculus Story Studio based in California, working with a team to create virtual reality storytelling. He was previously a visual development artist at Pacific Data Images/DreamWorks, working on film projects including Megamind, Madagascar 3, Merry Madagascar and Penguins of Madagascar, as well as 2017's The Boss Baby. On his Facebook page, Goro shares his virtual reality animations



made with the VR software Quill, and offers regular live training sessions via his Patreon site.

[www.facebook.com/goro.fujita](http://www.facebook.com/goro.fujita)





Mary Blair's concept art for Alice in Wonderland's unbirthdays celebration helped Walt Disney capture the essence of the scene.



Lee Blair drew this story sketch for 1942's Saludos Amigos, Disney's sixth film.

## They Drew as They Pleased: The Hidden Art of Disney's Mid-Century Era

**UNSUNG HEROES** Discover the ground-breaking artists and timeless art of Disney, during one of its most prolific periods of animated creativity

**Author** Didier Ghez **Publisher** Chronicle Books **Price** £35 **Web** [www.chroniclebooks.com](http://www.chroniclebooks.com) **Available** Now

**T**hey Drew as They Pleased is a six-part series that covers Disney's most influential artists and their artwork – largely unseen until now. The Hidden Art of Disney's Mid-Century Era is the fourth instalment, and explores Disney in the 1950s and 60s.

As countries recovered from World War II, this period marked some significant milestones for the animation giant, most notably its first foray into television and the opening of Disneyland. This was a time that some might argue to be Disney's most inventive and prosperous.

While that remains to be seen, what's certain is that five artists – Tom Oreb, John Dunn, Walt Peregoy, Lee Blair and Mary Blair – had a significant impact on the visual style of Disney at that time and for years to come. Didier Ghez explores the part each of these artists played in their own chapters.

Yet what's most compelling about this book is the artwork, which not



only includes the most beautiful pencil sketches and fully finished scenes bursting with colour, but also never-seen-before images from classics including Cinderella, Sleeping Beauty, Peter Pan and Alice in Wonderland. Being able to see this artwork and how these timeless films came about feels like a huge privilege. The only frustration here is that the book's footprint is slightly less than an A4

“Being able to see this art and how these films came about is a huge privilege”

Character concepts drawn by John Dunn for Mars and Beyond, which discussed the possibilities of life on other planets.



Character design of Sleeping Beauty's Princess Aurora, as sketched by Tom Oreb.



sheet of paper. Larger pages would enable you to pore over every detail.

That said, the copy to image ratio is very much weighted in the latter's favour, with much of the chapters pages dedicated to the artwork. Credit to Didier, he's made every word count by writing encapsulating tales of each artist to accompany their handiwork.

Standouts include the chapter on Mary Blair, a female artist and favourite of Walt Disney who not only excelled in a hugely male-dominated field, but who Didier reports 'most impacted Walt Disney's sense of visual style in the 1950s.' Another is that of Walt Peregoy, an artist who was aware of his own talent and 'carried an ego with

no equal at Disney.' Walt Peregoy's appreciation of his own art was so much so, in fact, that even the disapproval of Walt Disney didn't get in his way.

What draws us in most about this book is, of course, the art, but also Didier's warts-and-all insights. He hasn't splashed Disney glitter over its history. Instead, he's given a true account of how these largely unknown artists and their commitment to their craft – even when it came into question – helped refine Disney's artistic style for years to come, securing their place in animation history in the process.

**RATING** ★★★★★



# Pocket Art: Portrait Drawing

**FACE VALUE** An inspirational, compact portrait-drawing book that covers everything from the beginner's basics to tips for professionals

**Author** Joanna Henly **Publisher** Quarto Knows **Price** £12 **Web** [www.quartoknows.com](http://www.quartoknows.com) **Available Now**

**T**his pocket art guide is perfect for those artists looking to improve their portraiture skills. Artist Miss Led (real name Joanna Henly) breaks down the stages of portrait drawing into manageable, easy-to-understand sections, covering how to best approach creating beautiful portraits in a range of styles.

Aimed at beginners and experienced artists alike, this 112-page book acts as a



The guide features finished artwork from Miss Led in a range of styles, such as this watercolour piece.



Once you've grasped the structure of the skull, you'll be able to apply that knowledge to different portrait positions, such as a face in a three-quarter view.

solid introduction to portrait drawing techniques, but also looks at how professional artists can create fine art and commercial-style illustrations.

The handy-sized book is full of expert advice and tips, backed up by plenty of exercises for readers to put into practice. Copy is minimal but covers everything it needs to, leaving more space for Miss Led's beautiful art.

This manual is well designed, clearly written, and you'll be hard pushed to find a bag it doesn't fit in. Like all good tutorial-style books, it works because it's accessible to artists of every skill level. Packed with inspirational art and very affordable, Pocket Art: Portrait Drawing comes highly recommended.

**RATING** ★★★★★

# Nuthin' But Mech 4

**SCI-FI STOMPERS** Welcome to the final outing of a compilation of imaginatively designed walking machines, which goes out with a bang

**Editor** Lorin Wood **Publisher** Design Studio Press **Price** £23 **Web** [www.designstudiopress.com](http://www.designstudiopress.com) **Available Now**

**N**uthin' But Mech 4 is the fourth and final book in the series that collects original mech-related art, created by industry leading artists and designers.

It all started back in 2012, when nuthinbutmech blogger Lorin Wood was asked to produce a printed companion to his blog. Three volumes down, Lorin has decided this book will mark the end of the mech journey.

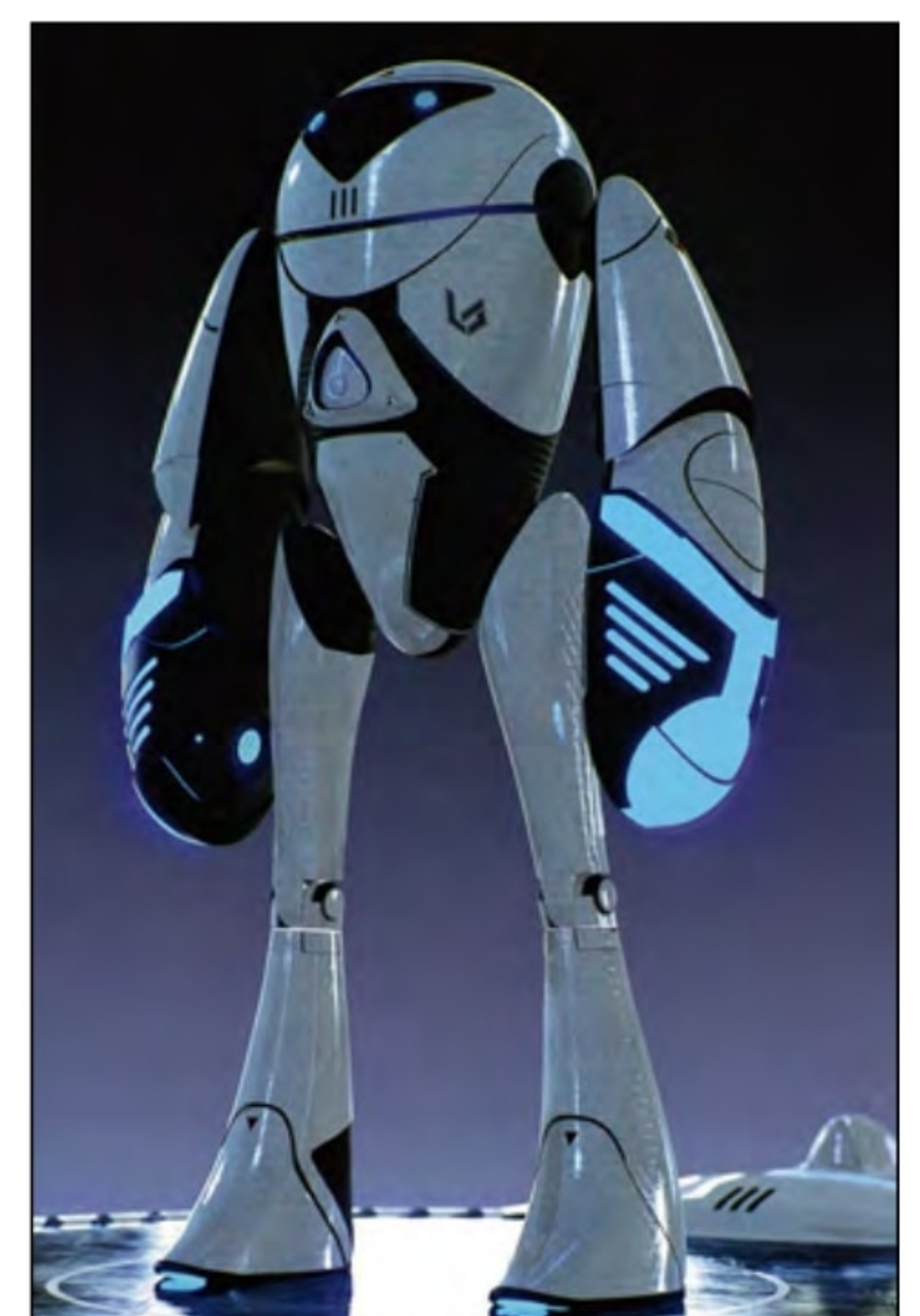


Concept artist Robert Chew likes to combine man, machine and the natural world. Hence the giant robot bird on stage at a concert.

And it doesn't disappoint. The book's 180-plus pages feature artists from various creative industries, including film, gaming and animation, each of which have an accompanying – often witty – biography. In a fitting farewell, this volume also features 57 artists, a series high, many of which have included a selection of 3D renders, painting and beautifully bright and colourful concept sketches, which are a welcome addition to the distinct dark look and feel of the book.

There's a fantastic selection of mech designs to behold and the art is top notch. So if you want a little robot inspiration but four books is pushing it, this is the volume to choose. However, for Nuthin' But Mech fans, this is a must-have to complete the series.

**RATING** ★★★★★



Halo 5 concept artist Gus Mendonca painted this Boomer mech for an independent game project.





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# Traditional Artist

Inspiration and advice from the best pro artists

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## This issue:

**100 Traditional art FXPosé**  
Explore this month's selection of the finest traditional art!

**104 Workshop: Building intensity with graphite**  
Discover how Jenna Kass is able to create a strong sense of depth and focus within a drawing, by building up layers of graphite powder and pencil.



**110 Workshop: Refine an image through storytelling**  
Ting Xue discusses her painting Fishing, revealing her inspiration, her use of textures and how she captures the viewer's attention.

**114 First Impressions: Larry MacDougall**  
Mysterious ravens feature heavily in this fantasy artist's work.



# FXPosé

SHOWCASING THE FINEST TRADITIONAL ARTISTS



## Bernard Lee

LOCATION: US MEDIA: Oils WEB: [www.bernardleeart.com](http://www.bernardleeart.com)

Previously an art director at Scientific America based in New York, Bernard now creates illustrations for publishing, editorial and entertainment clients.



### 1 EMPIRE

"A depiction of Ottoman soldiers going off to defend their conquered territory against Napoleon's invading army. I love any opportunity to dive in to something complex with many moving parts."

### 2 CORINTHIA

"My love of history is particularly rooted in wanting to understand cause and effect. Here I wanted to illustrate the idea of how world views can come to an end at the hands of another."

### 3 MARS

"Here, inspiration came from Gustav Holst's Mars from The Planets suite. While working on this, I kept thinking about how strange it is to essentially translate words, or in this case sounds, into an image."



3











## Eeva Nikunen

**LOCATION:** Finland **MEDIA:** Oils, graphite **WEB:** [www.eevanikunen.com](http://www.eevanikunen.com)

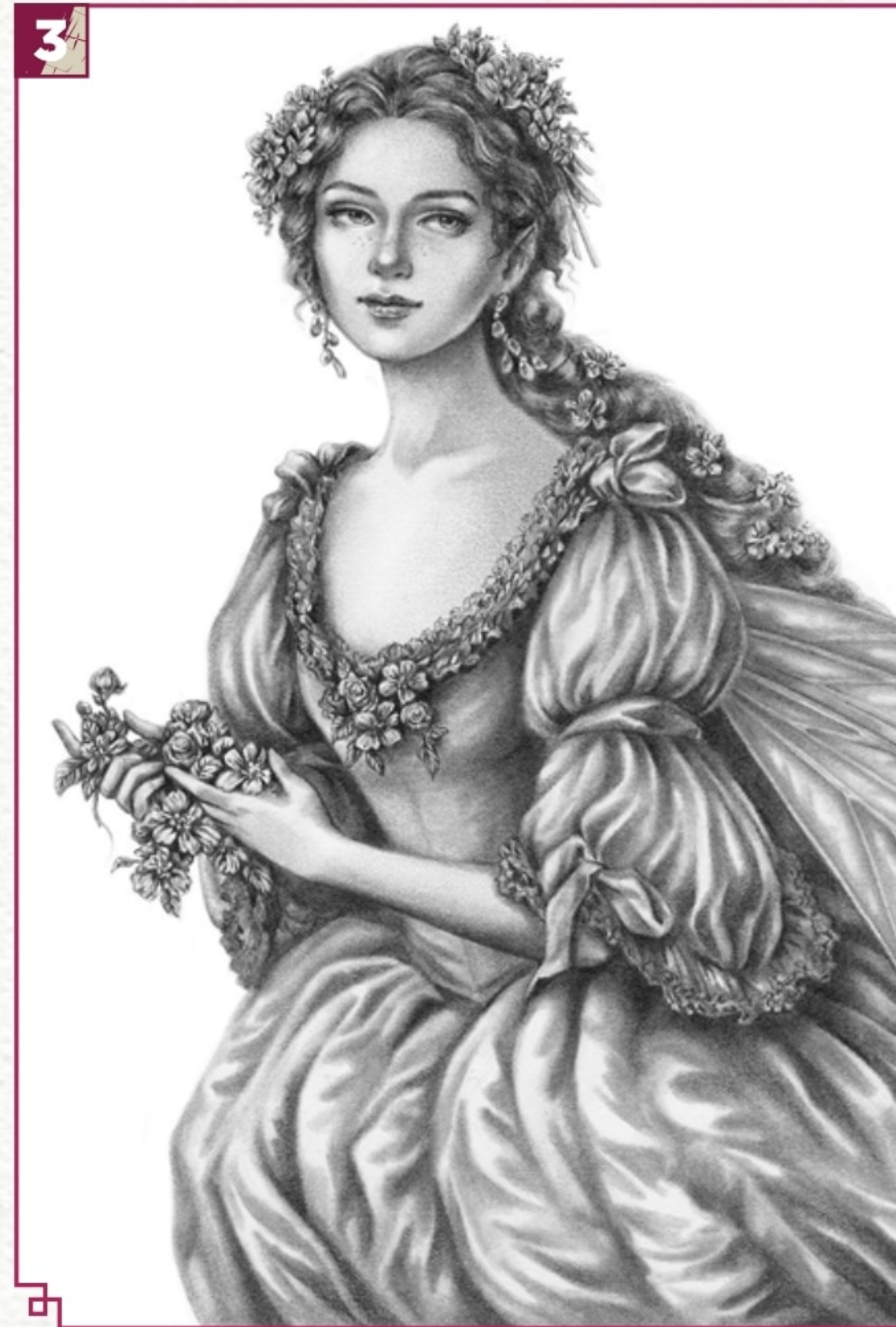
Eeva's work is inspired by fantasy literature, classic fairy tales, and Finnish and Russian folk stories. Her interest in costume history is also evident in her art.

### 1 WINTER PRELUDE

"The first in a series of seasonal themed paintings that I'm working on. I'm greatly inspired by Russian fairy tale art, especially the illustrator Ivan Bilibin."

### 2 SHE REACHED FOR THE SUN AND THE MOON

"This painting was for The Haven Gallery in New York. The theme was women in power throughout history and in mythology."



### 3 FLOWER FAERY

"This piece is from Enchanted Valley, an illustrated book I self-published earlier this year. I've long been interested in costume design, and I like to pay a lot of attention to the details of my characters' clothing in my art."

### 4 ADMIT ONE

"Another illustration from Enchanted Valley. I experimented with adding gold acrylic paint, which helped me to achieve the look of a vintage frame."







Pencil

# BUILDING INTENSITY WITH GRAPHITE

Discover how **JENNA KASS** is able to create a strong sense of depth and focus within a drawing, by building up layers of graphite powder and pencil

For the past three years, I've been using graphite as a medium for illustration, first only with mechanical pencils, then over the past two years adding powdered graphite into the mix. The art I make is all about subtlety of sentiment and narrative, and I wanted to find a medium in which I could really explore that nuance.

Even prior to exclusively working in graphite, I was always a fan of using light and shadow to tell a story or communicate an emotion. Regardless of what medium I used, I learned that the key was to work in layers: no darks were going to look deep enough or properly integrated unless they were built up patiently.

Graphite opened new doors in this regard; I loved how suited it was to a gradual process. It's a forgiving medium, coming in many forms, able to be applied a lot of different ways, and can erase seemingly forever (or, as I found out during this workshop, until the New York humidity foils your plans!). Additionally, living in a small apartment necessitates a small studio, and working in graphite means I can reduce my entire setup to a desktop drafting "table" with a lamp and my computer.

## BACK AND FORTH

For me, drawing in graphite involves a lot of working back and forth with soft "washes" in its powdered form and structured hatching in pencil. Yet it's all focused on bringing forth a subtle, engaging image. As someone who jokes about her control issues, this method has proven to be a remarkable mix of managing every



Jenna's compact apartment has meant that she's had to streamline her workspace. Luckily, her graphite tools make this possible.

single detail and finding opportunities in happy accidents.

In this workshop, I'll demonstrate how I use pencil and powdered graphite in tandem to create a sensitive drawing with rich, dark values. There's very little traditional rendering in my rendering process: I use single-direction pencil hatching to create my forms and powdered graphite to build my values.

That being said, by working from good photo reference and making sure one method doesn't outweigh

the other, the outcome is a realistic illustration. Not every step winds up working perfectly, but through improvisation and the discipline to work with the medium instead of fighting it, you'll get to see exactly what graphite can accomplish.



**Jenna is a NYC native, living in Astoria with her fiancé and a fine dusting of graphite powder. She loves creating dreamlike explorations of the melancholy, and wishes her lease allowed for a cat. See more of her art at [www.jennakass.com](http://www.jennakass.com).** ➡



# Traditional Artist Workshop

## MATERIALS

### PAPER

■ Strathmore 300 Series Smooth Bristol

### PENCILS

■ Two Pentel Twist-Erase mechanical pencils (0.5mm): one with 2B lead and one with 4B lead

### ERASERS

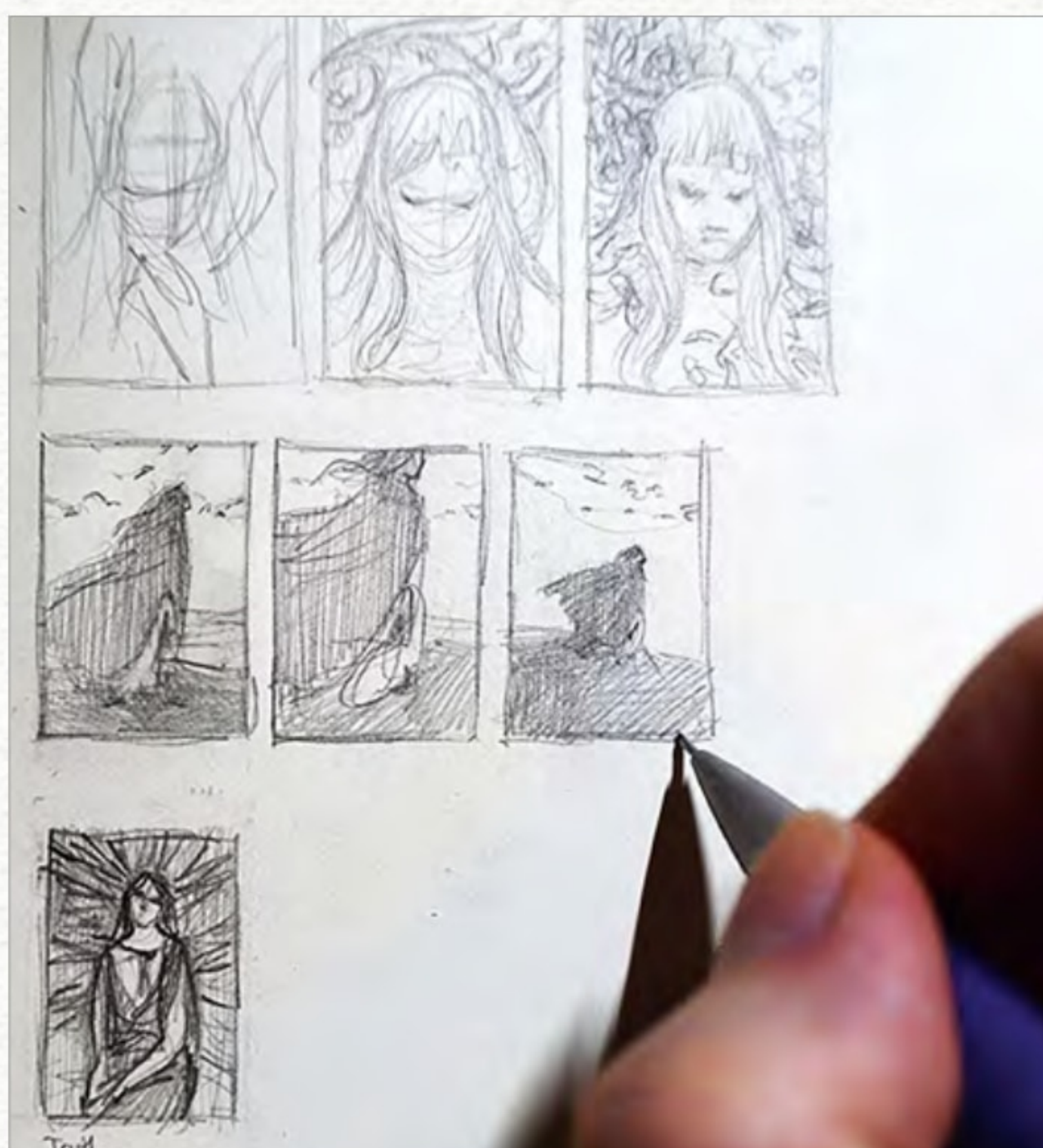
■ Kneaded eraser  
■ General's Factic mechanical eraser

### POWDERED GRAPHITE

■ General's powdered graphite

### BRUSH

■ 0.5-inch soft synthetic flat



## 1 *Thumbnailing the idea*

When I first have an idea for a drawing, I turn it around in my head for some time before putting it down on paper. I only do three thumbnails before deciding that the first one is the winner after all, but it's still important to see what the variations look like outside of my head.



## 2 *Reference compositing*

Now that I have a thumb, I take reference photos and composite them on top of it in Photoshop. I decide to buy Suzanne Helmigh's Gumroad references for the cloak, and I find some photos online that I can patch together for an approximation of the swan pose I want.



## 3 *Transferring the reference*

I print out the ref-comp and cover the back in graphite, then I tape it to my Bristol and trace the image. I transfer the figure and drapery fairly exactly, but am very general with the bird, because I'm still exploring where I want to take the pose.



## 4 *Tightening the drawing*

Before I can start with powdered graphite, I need to make sure my transferred lines won't disappear! I go over all of my lines with the 2B mechanical pencil, refining the initial drawing and develop a more elegant line in places where the transfer was awkward.





## 5 *First powdered graphite pass*

I scrub in powdered graphite with an old, no-brand, soft, synthetic flat brush, and while I'm keeping generally to the correct areas, I'm also being pretty messy. This is where I discover shapes and movement that I might not have thought to build for myself. This also gives me a base from which to build my darkest darks.



## 6 *Establishing pencil texture*

After the powdered graphite, I begin the next layer in the dark areas with 2B vertical hatch marks. I'm using medium pressure so the line is pretty dark without scoring the paper. This is a natural stroke for my hand, and will be almost everywhere in the drawing by the end – an easy way to unite the whole image.



## 7 *Softening as I work*

It's important to keep the pencil strokes from overwhelming the soft feeling I'm going for, so after each section of hatching I go over it with the same brush I used for the initial powdered graphite pass. The new lines soften and become integrated more into the image. I'll do this throughout the rest of the drawing process.



## 8 *Adding the darkest values*

Having laid in the base for all compositional elements and begun my rendering, I begin to pick out where my darkest values are with the 4B pencil. This is where the image starts to come together, although I'm using this less to render than to establish the value range for my own reference at this point. ➡





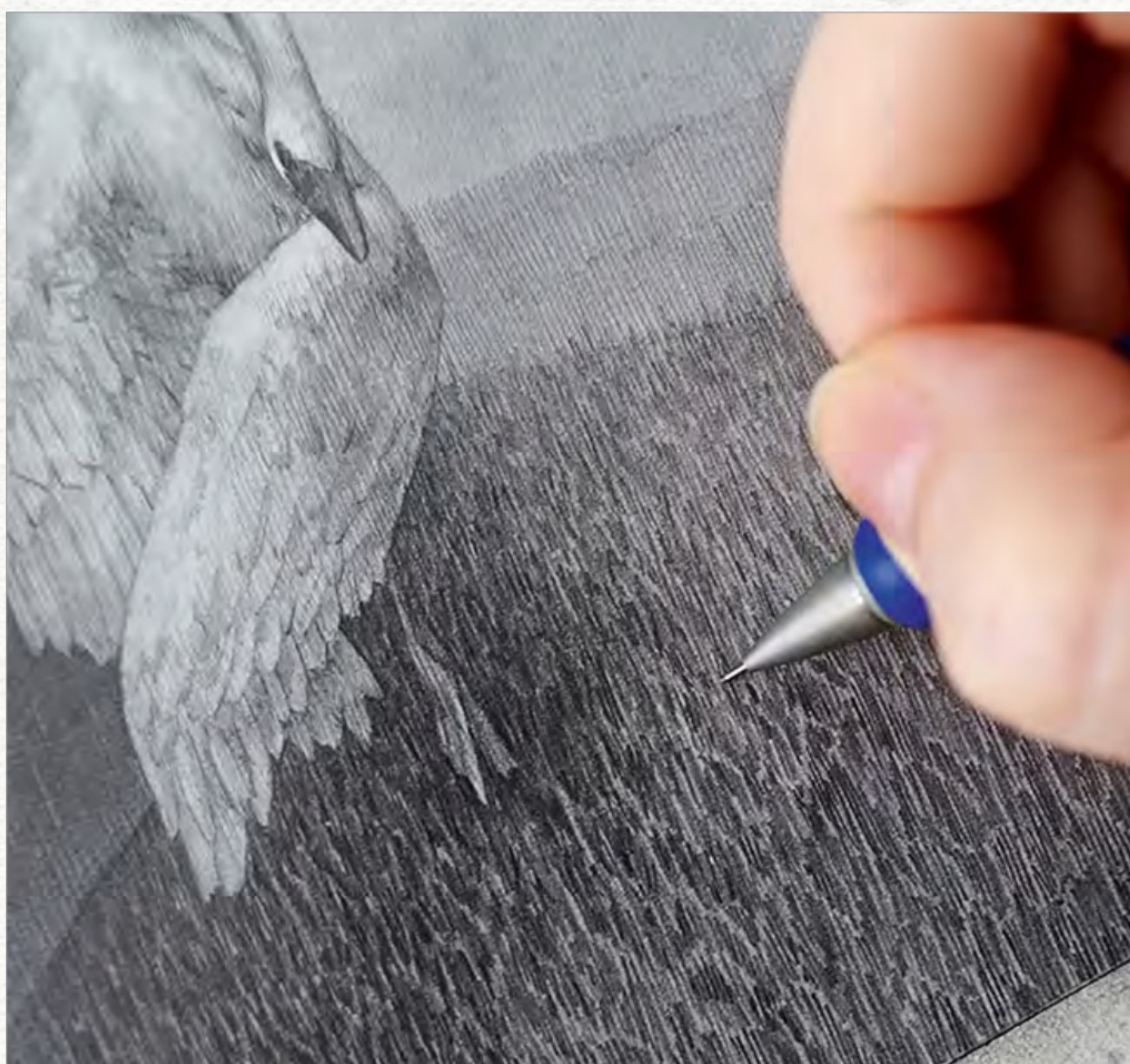
## 9 Detailing the swan – finally

I've been avoiding the bird up to now. I'm not certain how to draw it, and although I try not to psych myself out too badly, it happens sometimes. The answer is to just dive into it. I focus on my reference and the gesture, and as soon as I begin to actually work on the bird, I realise it's not so bad.



## 10 Finding the flow

There's been something bugging me about the flow of the cloak, and I'm going to fix it. I draw in the new shape right over the existing graphite, and then with my kneaded and mechanical erasers lift out the graphite that's too dark or in the wrong place. Then I lay in new graphite hatching to patch the gaps.



## 11 Building the environment

I've left the grass on the rolling hills until now because I consider rendering it tedious, but it's time to bite the bullet. Pencil hatching winds up being a great method for grass: just make varying shapes with slim gaps between them, then go over those with different shapes. Add in some individual blades, and you're done!



## 12 Darkening the values

Having fixed the cloak's shapes, I realise that it's not nearly as dark as I want it. I could add more hatching to darken it, but it's much faster to do another dark scrub-in with powdered graphite. I'll have to go back over it with pencil to re-establish the texture, but it finally fits the value structure that I wanted.





## 13 *Rendering the forms using the pencils*

Now that everything's in place and I have my value range, it's time for my favourite part of the process: rendering! I'm using both the 2B and 4B pencils as needed, and I'm still using vertical hatching almost exclusively; details in the hair, nostril, ear, and finger joints are exceptions. I'm working from my reference, but allowing the drawing to evolve as well.



## 14 *Sharpening the edges*

Edge control separates a pretty good drawing from a drawing that's finished. Not every edge should be hard: areas in shadow or far from the foreground can and should be softer. Things coming toward the viewer, or areas of desired high contrast become sharpened, although I'm trying not to make anything look "lined".



## 15 *Final highlights and finishing up*

With my kneaded eraser, I go through the entire drawing and gently lift out highlights in the face, hair, bird and arm. Some volume and key highlights have become lost with all of the softening passes, so it's immensely satisfying to pull them back out as my final touch. After that, the drawing is done! ●



Watercolour Gouache

## USE STORYTELLING TO REFINE AN IMAGE

TING XUE discusses the genesis of her painting Fishing, revealing her inspiration, her application of textures and how she uses contrast to focus the viewer's attention

This painting was done for Mermay 2018, the art event that was created by the veteran character artist Tom Bancroft. The original name of this painting was May's Trade, and features a girl sitting on an inflatable ring, trading some of her daily supplies with a group of mysterious underwater creatures.

Before sketching, I have a specific goal for the painting, which is to use

gouache to depict different skin textures underwater. Then an idea jumps into my head, of a little fairy feeding mermaids. She's sitting on a leaf, a slice of a flower petal or a timber block. However, as I start sketching I quickly change my idea. I'd much rather prefer to draw a character who's truer to life, rather than someone who could only exist in a fantasy story. So I change the little fairy into a young girl.

Now I imagine a girl, who's just finished her diving class, meeting some mermaids. And the mermaids are puzzled by the girl's feet. This is the essence of the story behind my art, which I now call Fishing. I love developing a story before painting it.



Ting is a freelance illustrator and visual development artist. Her speciality is gouache painting. You can see more of her art at [www.tingx-art.com](http://www.tingx-art.com). ➔

### Step-by-step: Creating a painting that's all at sea



#### 1 BRAINSTORMING SESSION

This painting was loosely inspired by a scene from the film *Pirates of the Caribbean: On Stranger Tides*. However, the initial idea is from my imagination. Afterwards, I quickly draw a lot of sketches to capture the poses of the curious mermaids and the final layout of the composition.



#### 2 CHECK THE LIGHTING

I use a thin colour layer to check the direction of my shadows and lighting. Because correcting mistakes in gouache is difficult, I don't rush this stage. You can use digital tools such as Photoshop to help you with your lighting decisions during the early stages of the painting process.



#### 3 BUILDING UP DETAIL

I finally start to paint by tackling the background first. I use a collection of reference photos to help me to build up the clouds and beautiful ripples in the water. I put down basic colours first, then one more layer for spotlights. I'll only add the highlights when I've finished the rest of the painting.

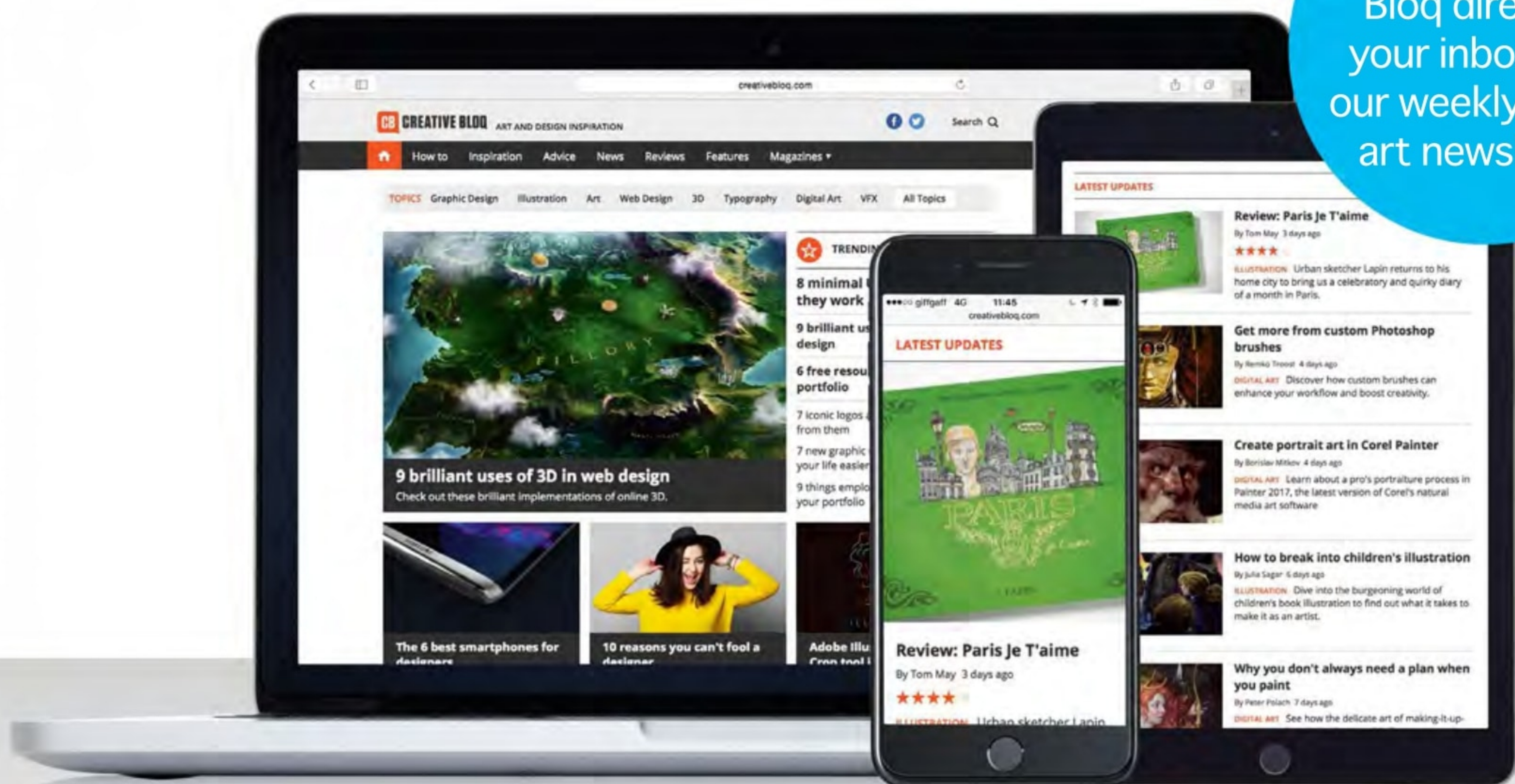






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## Points of interest: What lies beneath

### The ripple effect

I was especially pleased by how the texture of the ripples turned out. I searched for a lot of references before I started to paint. Because this a gouache painting, it's hard to make revisions once the paint is on the canvas. So I painted a thin layer for capturing the shape of the shadows, which helped me a lot.

### MATERIALS

#### PAPER

■ Canson watercolour paper, 140lb, cold press

#### PAINTS

■ Holbein acrylic gouache  
■ Arteza gouache

#### BRUSHES

■ Synthetic watercolour and acrylic brushes, sizes 0 to 7  
■ Masking tape



### Contrast and lighting

If I remove all the colour from my painting, you can see how I've put high-value contrast levels inside the smaller circle. The sunlight comes in from the top right corner, which enables me to enhance the various textures within my focal point.

### Basic sketch

This early sketch, featuring the fairy trading with the mermaids, is embarrassingly basic. But it helps me to check that the focal point, storytelling, lighting and composition is working as the painting develops. Just two coloured pencils are enough for me to visualise my idea, while a marker pen depicts the shadows on the mermaids' faces.





## First Impressions

✧ Larry MacDougall ✧

Mysterious ravens feature heavily in the fantasy work of this Canadian artist...



Where did you grow up and how has this influenced your art?

I grew up in the city of Hamilton, Ontario,

which, as you may know, is perched right on the Niagara Escarpment. As a kid I was surrounded by the steep cliffs and wooded gorges of the escarpment. I think this exciting, mysterious landscape has left a permanent mark on my art.

Can you describe the place where you usually create your art?

Every day I work in my studio, which is a bedroom in our flat on the 12th floor overlooking the Dundas Valley. I can see for miles and there are thousands of trees out there. It's perfect for me; watching the storms roll through or, as now, the changing colours of autumn.

How has the art industry changed since you've been a part of it?

The internet has made everything about the art business better, in my view. You can promote yourself on



### TINCTURE

"A scene from my current project Gwelf, which I'm both writing and illustrating. Gwelf could be explained by saying it's like The Wind in the Willows meets The Walking Dead with The Lord of the Rings. It's really fun."

social media, sell your work online and get paid instantly. None of that was available to me when I started.

Is creating art as a career all you thought it would be?

Making a living as an artist has

“ Making a living as an artist is very difficult and you can't ease up or relax at all – ever ”

What's the last piece that you finished, and how do the two artworks differ?

A very recent piece of mine is called Tincture (above). In this picture I've put in the Halloween mood and atmosphere that I love. It's a world away from the saccharine animation I was doing then.

What advice would you give to your younger self to aid you on the way?

I would tell the younger me to be braver and take more chances.

What character or scene that you've painted do you most identify with?

Many years ago I painted a picture of a raven in a cart with a load of pumpkins (left). I feel this picture was the first time I really captured the feel of the kind of art I want to make. I'm still drawing this same bird two decades later.

Canadian-born Larry discovered the seminal book *Faeries* by Alan Lee and Brian Froud at a young age, and he's been painting and drawing nature-based fantasy ever since. You can catch up with the artist and see his latest artworks by following him on Twitter: @larrymacdougall.



### PUMPKIN DEALER

"I painted this raven witch nearly 20 years ago and have been doing versions of her ever since."

brought me many unexpected surprises and I've been very lucky in some ways. It's also very difficult and you can't ease up or relax at all – ever. The competition is relentless and unforgiving.

Tell us about your first paid commissioned piece?

It was drawing backgrounds, working in an animation studio in Toronto. It wasn't a great time for me because the style of the children's movie was far away from the kind of work that I wanted to do then, but I took the job purely for the money and the experience.



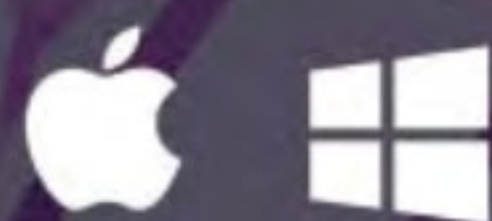
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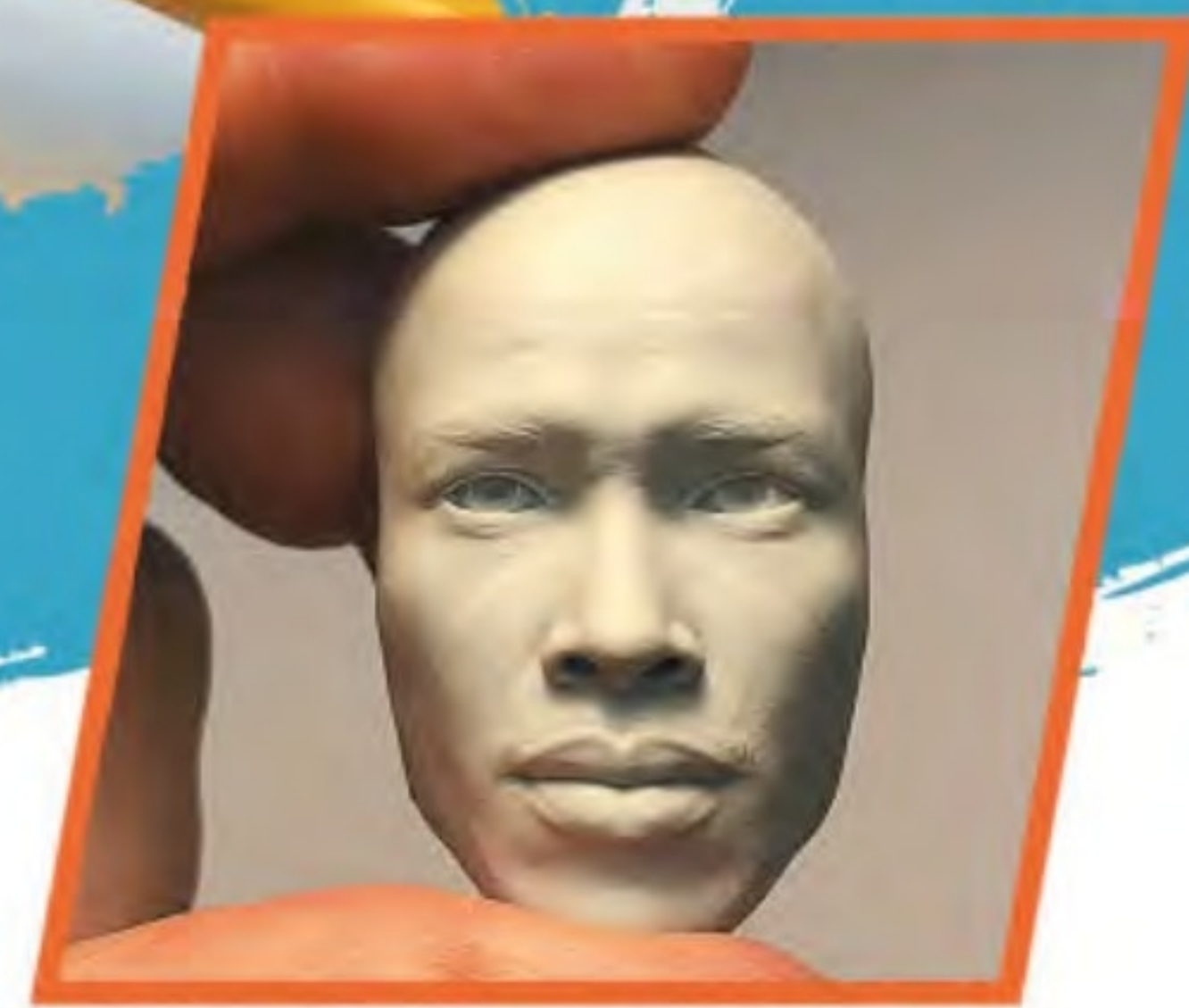
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